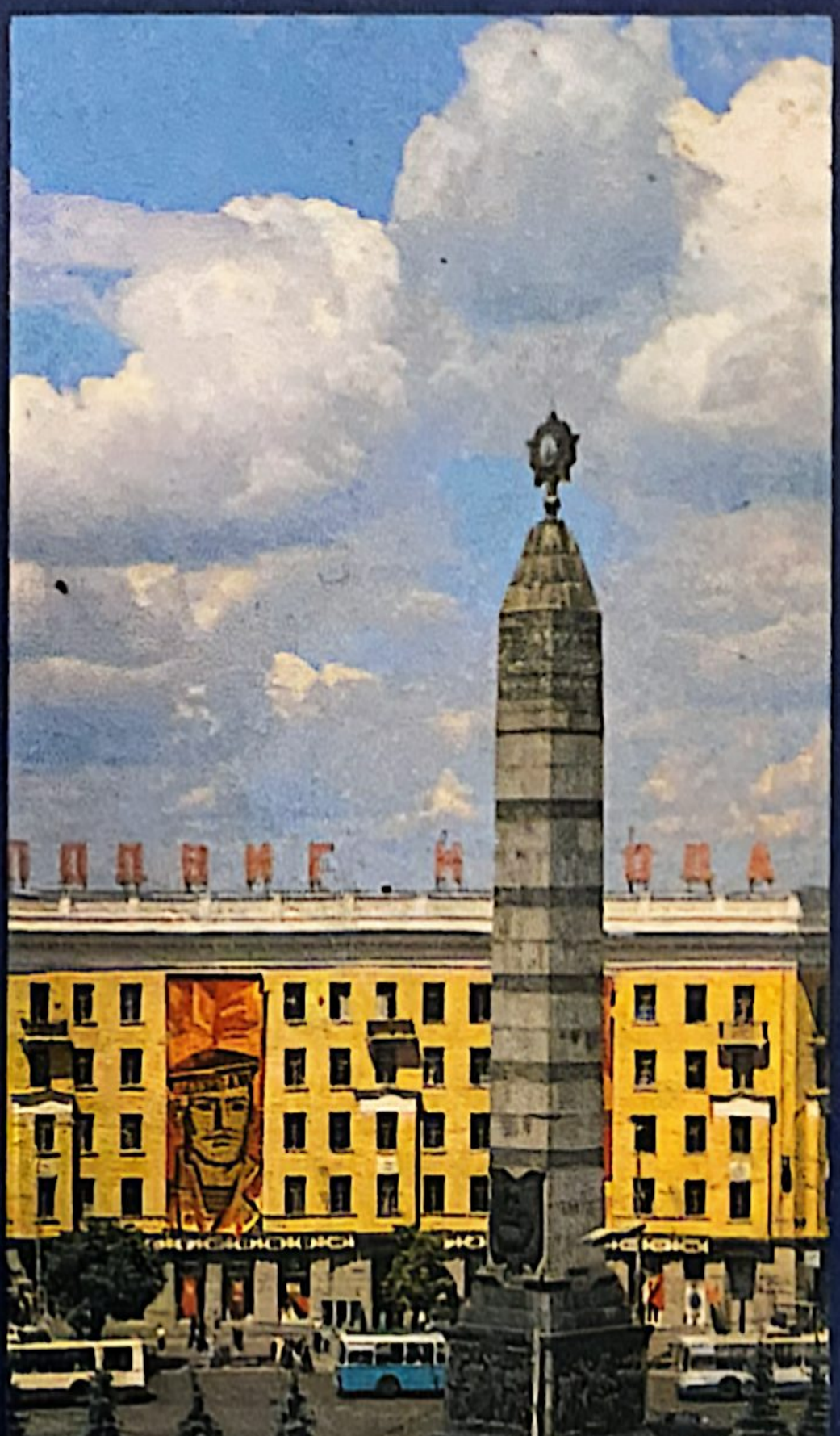
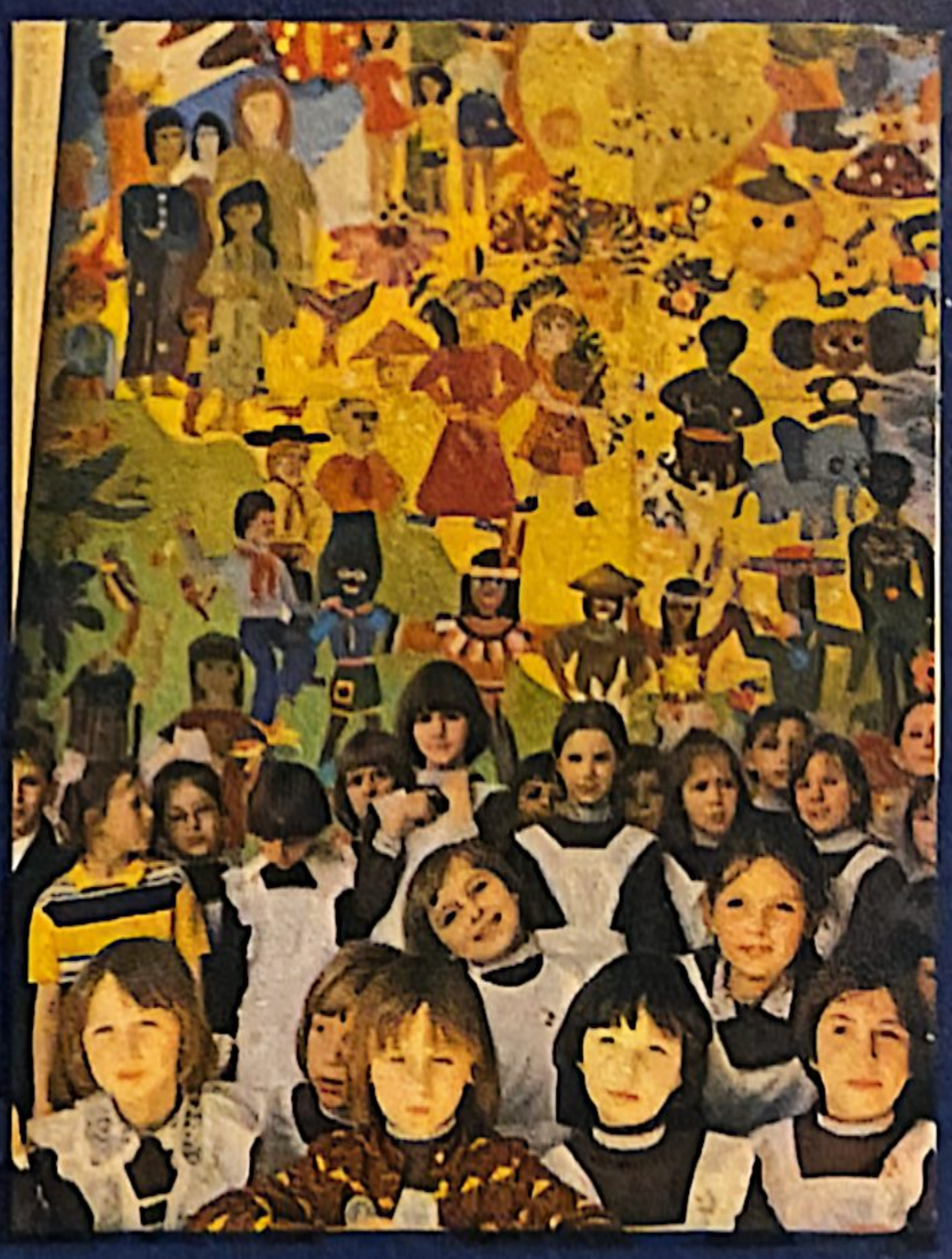
V. BORUSHKO

BYELORUSSIA

people · events · facts

Soviet Byelorussia is one of the fifteen equal republics forming the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics





V. BORUSHKO

BYELORUSSIA:
People, Events, Facts

The Byelorussian SSR
Formed on January 1, 1919
Joined the Union of the SSR
on December 30, 1922

Territory	207 600 sq km
Population	9 800 000 people
Forests	7 100 000 hectares
Lakes	10 700
Rivers	20 700
Towns	96
Settlements	111
Villages	26 000

Byelorussia is one of the fifteen equal republics incorporated in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Owing to the Great October Revolution Byelorussia, formerly a backward agrarian territory of the Russian Empire, has turned into a republic of highly developed industry and culture and is now in the prime of its creative powers.

It has entered the seventh decade of its existence demonstrating to the whole world its great achievements in all fields of life activity — in economic development and national prosperity, science and art, in spiritual elevation of the working people.

The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is an independent sovereign state with its own territory and people, with its own Constitution, government bodies, capital, emblem, flag and anthem.

The republic numbers six regions: Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev regions.

The capital of Soviet Byelorussia is Minsk, a Hero City.

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BYELORUSSIA

people · events · facts

MINSK "BELARUS" 1983

Translated from the Russian
by A. A. Weise and Y. N. Gorodkov

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BYELORUSSIAN NATURE

Geographical Situation. The BSSR is situated at the western boundaries of our Motherland — nearly in the very centre of Europe. It neighbours on the Russian Federation in the north and east, the Ukraine in the south, People's Poland in the west and on Lithuania and Latvia in the north-west.

Being located between 23° 11′ and 32° 47′ of eastern longitude Byelorussia lies in the belt of Moscow time which is two hours ahead of the world (Greenwich) and, consequently, European mean time.

Territory. Byelorussia stretches for 560 kilometres from south to north and 650 kilometres from east to west. By the size of its territory — 207 600 sq km — it ranks sixth among the republics of the Union (following the RSFSR, Kazakhstan, the Ukraine, the Turkmen and Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republics).

Relief. Byelorussia is a plain and hill country. It occupies the western outskirts of the Russian, or East-European, Plain and is on an average 160 metres above the sea. The vastest and hilliest elevation is the Byelorussian Ridge stretching from west to east. In the centre of the ridge to the south-west of Minsk is the peak of Byelorussia — Mount Dzerzhinskaya which is 346 metres high. The elevated and broken relief is characteristic of the north-west of the republic as well. The south-eastern and eastern areas are flatter. Here are the Central Berezina Plain and beyond the Dnieper — Orsha-Mogilev Plateau rising 200-240 metres above the sea. Nearly one third of the Byelorussian territory is taken up by the Polesye

lowlands. The lowest area with an absolute mark of 80 metres is in the Neman valley near the Lithuanian border.

The Byelorussian relief was considerably determined by glaciers. The Berezina glacier was the most ancient, the Dnieper glacier was the most powerful, the very last one which began melting 17 000 years ago was the Valdai glacier. They left their traces in the form of the present-day lowlands and elevations, lakes and rivers. The most ancient rocks that formed 1.5-2.0 billion years ago — grey and pink granites, gneisses — are concealed under a huge thickness of sedimentary rocks and emerge to the surface only in one place in Polesye.

Climate. The republic is located in the temperate zone between 51° 16′ and 56° 10′ of northern latitude some 200-500 km away from the Baltic Sea in the way of the prevailing Atlantic winds. This results in its temperate and mild climate transitional from maritime to continental.

Winter sets in in November; in the north — in the middle of the month, in the south — at the end. It lasts from 105 to 145 days. The average January temperature in the south of the republic is 5 °C and 8 °C below zero in the north. The frosts are not severe, as a rule, 15-17 °C, and do not stay long. They quickly give way to thaws.

The approach of spring is already felt early in March when the warm breath of the Atlantic gets stronger and stronger. Snow completely disappears by the middle of April. The days when orchards are in blossom and when fresh, tender verdure yet untouched by man or the baking sun covers the whole land are the most marvellous days in spring.

Summer is the longest season in Byelorussia. It lasts to 150 days, sometimes till the end of September and the beginning of October in the south. The hottest month is July when the average temperature is 17.5 °C in the north and 19.7 °C in the south.

41 per cent of precipitation falls in summer, which makes up an annual average of 600-650 mm throug-

hout the republic. There is enough precipitation during the year although early in summer moisture is somewhat scarce for winter and spring crops to grow. But on the whole the climate of the republic is favourable for agriculture. Even warm season representatives of the south — grapes and apricots — grow ripe in some places.

Autumn comes in the second half of September in the north-east and early in October in the south-west when the arerage daily temperature of the air goes below 10 °C above zero and frosts are more and more frequent.

Lakes. There are 10 780 lakes on the territory of Byelorussia. They are the blue eyes of the republic and it is because of them that the brotherly peoples call it blue-eyed sister. Lakes are particularly numerous in Byelorussian Poozerje in the north. Quite a number of them is in Polesye in the south. They are not many only in the elevated middle region. The lakes of the northern part of Byelorussia are of glacial origin. They are noted for their great depth, transparency of water and their twisting banks. Here, in the north, is Lake Dolgoje, the deepest lake in the republic. It is 53.7 metres deep.

The biggest lake in Poozerje and in the whole of Byelorussia is Naroch. Its mirror is 80 sq km in area, the maximum depth is nearly 25 metres. This is why people call it a Byelorussian sea. The water is limpid and the sandy bottom can be seen at a depth of 5-7 metres. In windy weather the lake, which is generally pleasant, frowns and rises in waves like a sea. Storms on the lake are particularly menacing. 22 species of fish, including the famous eel, are found in the lake. Today Naroch is the main health resort in the republic. Here on its banks in the midde of a pinewood there are two sanatoria, three rest homes, a summer cottage settlement, a tourist centre and pioneer camps including "Zubrionok", an all-year-roud Byelorussian "Artek".

In the north of the republic are the picturesque Braslav lakes. There are more than thirty of them. In

the majority of cases they are linked. This is a regular maze of straits, necks of land, bays, capes and islets strewn about the lakes. Thousands of inhabitants from Byelorussia, Leningrad, Moscow, the Baltic republics and the South readily come here to rest. Amidst the bogs of Polesye is Lake Tchervonoje or Prince Lake which is 43.6 sq km in area. It is covered with many legends. One of them narrates that the Prince of Slutsk, the ruler of those quarters, shut up his own brother in the castle built in the centre of the lake. One night a storm destroyed the castle and the waves wrapped the captive prince. Ever since, according to the legend, the lake has been referred to as Prince Lake. In war when Byelorussia was occupied by Germans, aeroplanes that used to fly round to guerrillas from beyond the front line, from the Greater Land, landed on the ice of the lake.

In the middle zone of Byelorussia between Baranovichi and Novogrudok amidst a pinewood is Lake Svitjaz — a regular fairytale nook. In his creations the great Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz, a native of these places, glorified with inspiration its marvellous beauty. The picturesqueness and magic quiet of the lake continue to inspire musicians, singers, painters, poets and national craftsmen. The lake and the surrounding forest area which make up the Svitjaz natural complex have been declared a state scenic reserve and put under protection as a valuable natural monument.

In addition to creations of nature — natural lakes — there are creations of man — artificial storage lakes — appearing everywhere in the republic. They are 70 now. One of the biggest artificial lakes is Zaslavl lake or, as people call it, the Minsk Sea. It is 31.1 sq km in area. The lake was created in 1955 not far from Minsk on the flood land of the river Svislotch, a place that used to be the hollow of an ancient glacial lake. The revived lake as well as the neighbouring forests form a recreation area which is most popular with the inhabitants of Minsk.

Another "sea" — Vileika artifical lake — appeared on the map of the BSSR in 1973. Its area —

75 sq km — is wuch larger than that of the Minsk Sea. The new reservoir together with other works represents the head water development of the Vileika-Minsk water system. From this the waters transferred by powerful pumps into the canal are directed to the Minsk Sea and other artificial lakes of the Byelorussian capital.

Rivers. In the republic there are 20 780 rivers with the overall length of 90 600 km. 1489 rivers are more than ten kilometres long. These include 48 rivers which are over a hundred kilometres long and 7 rivers (Vilja, Berezina, Neman, Sozh, Pripjat, Western Dvina and Dnieper) that are more than five hundred kilometres long. The average river density is 43.6 km to a hundred square kilometres. The navigable part of the rivers equals 3900 km. In perspective a transformation is envisaged for a number of rivers. The Western Dvina will become deeper and will be connected to the Dnieper and the Volga. Dikes and storage lakes will help to tame the Pripjat and the Western Bug which often flood the fertile lands and the populated areas of the Byelorussian and Ukrainian Polesye and the east of Poland with their waters.

Soil. The mild, humid climate and the light texture of the parent rocks, the location in the forest area and the flat relief determined three main types of soil development on the territory of Byelorussia: sod, podzol and bog formations. The sod-podzolic (sandy and loamy) soils prevail, occupying about 70 per cent of the territory. Nearly one fourth of the territory is covered with sod-boggy and peat-boggy soils that need improvement. The sandy soils covering the islets in the bogs of Polesye and the elevated areas of the Neman lowland are the least beneficial.

Vegetation. The flora of the republic is quite varied. Its basis is made up of grasses represented by 1356 species. There are 104 species of wood plants, including 28 species of trees, 59 species of bushes and 17 species of shrubs. In addition, there are about five hundred types of algae, over a thousand species of mushrooms, about six hundred species of lichen and over four hundred types of Bryophyta.

Forests. The Byelorussian forests, pinewoods, mighty oak groves, hornbeam and oak groods, spruce forests, birch groves, alder forests, stern virgin forests and all sorts of other mixed forest formations are the charm, wealth and pride of the republic. Before the war in 1941 the forests occupied 28 per cent of the Byelorussian territory. Their area was reduced to 19 per cent in the years of the German occupation and the first postwar years. Now they have by far exceeded their prewar size and occupy over one third of the territory. The republic has not a single deforested area.

The coniferous forests prevail — 68 per cent. The asp and birch forests and alder forests occupy 27 per cent and the broad-leaf forests — 5 per cent. The leading place among the various species belongs to the pine — 59 per cent. The pine is followed by the birch — 15 per cent, the fir — 10 per cent, the alder — 9 per cent, the oak — 4 per cent. The asp, maple, ash and hornbeam grow in abundance as well. The Siberian larch, Amur cork, Manchurian welnut brought from the east of the country, are also found in the republic. The yew, a heat-loving arrival from Central Europe, is found in the west of Byelorussia.

Belovezhskaya Pushcha. The majestic Belovezhskaya Pushcha (Belaja Vezha forest reserve) spreads out in the south-west of the republic. It is 145 000 hectares in area. About 88 000 hectares are in the USSR and 57 000 — in People's Poland. Its plant kingdom is varied. There are 21 species of wood plants, 22 species of shrubs and 813 species of grasses. Five forest formations are found here: a pinewood, a spruce forest, a grove, a grood (hornbeam and oak mixed groves) and an ols (alder forest). G. Kartsov, a Russian scientist, wrote at the beginning of the 20th century: "He who has never been to Belovezhskaya Pushcha can hardly imagine the majestic and peculiar charm of this forest, still primitive in many quarters. It is devoid of the uniformly grim and monotonous colour of a dense northern pinewood. It is majestic, wild, with an imprint of decrepitude, at the same time rousing an infinite interest

for the variety of its forest scenes... In passing through the forest one cannot get tired of watching and admiring. A lover of nature is involuntarily enveloped with deep emotion at the sight of the century-old pines and oaks...". Considerable injuries were inflicted on the pushcha by the two world wars, yet it continues to retain all its majestic beauty. 200-350-year pines rise 30 or more metres. There are pines aged up to 220 that are 50 metres tall. There also grow mighty 300-500-year-old oaks which are nearly two metres thick.

The animal kindom of the pushcha is rich too. 216 species of the feathered — settled and migratory birds, birds staying for the winter and simply casual stray birds — fill the forest reserve with their singing. Among them one can find the wood-grouse, hazel-hen, woodcock, duck, blackcock, partridge, quail... even the black stork. There are also about 60 species of mammals, including the fallow-deer and European stag, elk and roe, wild boar and badger, beaver and otter, mink and polecat, marten and lynx. There are more than two thousand deer, about a thousand roes, over a hundred elks, about two thousand boars. But, of course, the king of beasts here is the aurochs. This most ancient bull is the biggest wild animal in Europe nowadays. The length of an aurochs is 3.5-3.75 metres, its height is up to 1.8 metres, the average weight is 800 kilogrammes (males weigh up to 1.2 tonnes). Although it looks awkward it can run among trees very quickly and deftly, and it easily swims. Being rather mighty it brings down not very thick trunks in a rage, tosses up logs with its horns. It feeds on grass in the summer and on the bark and twigs of willows, asps, oaks, pines, ashes and other trees and bushes of the forest in the winter.

The aurochs and Belovezhskaya Pushcha are inseparable from each other. S. A. Severtsev, an explorer of the pushcha had a reason for remarking that "...the history of aurochs and the history of the pushcha are interlaced. The pushcha has remained because there were aurochs in it, the aurochs have remained because there was a pushcha". In bygone days there was

a countless number of aurochs in the forest, but the herd was gradually diminishing. By the beginning of the first world war in 1914 the pushcha numbered 727 aurochs. During the war William's troops killed all the aurochs in the pushcha driving out to Germany only part of them. In the 20s a few beasts came back to the native forest and by June 1941 there were already 21 of them. The nazi occupation left our republic without aurochs again. In 1946 the Polich government tranferred five animals to the Soviet part of the pushcha and their stock began growing quickly. Over 120 of them have been sent to other reserves of the country and abroad, still there is quite a number of them remaining in the forest — more than 150. The pushcha and the aurochs are together again, inseparable again although some of them sometimes make distant flights from the pushcha — about 100-300 kilometres.

In addition to Belovezhskaya Pushcha there are other pushchas as well — Nalibokskaja, Grodnenskaja, Ruzhanskaja, Kotrjanskaja, Lipichanskaja, Kornilovskaja, Staraja, Tjomnaja, Sennenskaja... In the years of the Great Patriotic War the pushchas, pinewoods, spruce forests, groves were the homes of the Byelorussian guerrillas who were often called forest soldiers. It is not without reason, of course, that one of the favourite and popular songs in the republic is the song with the moving words: "Oh, birches and pine trees — sisters of partisans...".

Forest is a favourite resting-place for the inhabitants of Byelorussia. They are drawn to forests by clear air, peace, scenes of unique beauty, hunting, mushrooms, berries and herbs. 5270 resting-places and recreation areas, 614 parking-places for cars and bicycles, 608 lots for tents and over a thousand places for laying fires have been organized with a view to people's convenience and vegetation conservation.

Byelorussians are fond of their forests and do much to preserve and increase this national wealth. Forests have been and remain good friends of towns and villages. Quite often they come closely to their outskirts

and enter into their location as integral components. Many highways and country roads are wonderful birch or linden lanes turning into green corridors in the summer.

Parks. The Byelorussian forests have quite a number of "townish" brothers — parks and gardens. Of great interest are the surviving old parks laid in XVII-XIX centuries. Some of them are "regular" i.e. based on geometrical construction, others are scenic or land-scape parks. One of the best parks and the biggest in the republic is the park in Nesvizh. It was founded near a medieval castle as far back as 1604. It is 106 hectares in area, the entire castle and park ensemble together with the reservoirs occupying over two hundred hectares.

About seven hundred parks have been laid in the towns and villages of Byelorussia in the years of Soviet power in memory of V. I. Lenin, Great October anniversaries, the victory in the Great Patriotic War and other events.

Bogs. Bogs are an integral part of the Byelorussian landscape. They occupy about 2 500 000 hectares (including reclaimed marshes) or 12.4 per cent of the territory. Sometimes bogs are looked upon as a landscape component which is hostile to man and which can only be useful after the bogs have been drained. But this is not quite so. Undrained bogs give hay and very valuable black alder forests grow on them. Bogs are also a natural plantation of many berries (cranberries, blueberries, bilberries, red and black currant, raspberries) and medicinal herbs (valerian, sweetflag, ledum, cudweed, sundew, butterbur). They are also excellent hunting lands where birds and beasts live in a quiet environment. In addition, bogs feed many rivers and soften temperature fluctuations. Therefore part of them is going to remain in the natural form in the future.

Fauna. The animal kingdom of the republic is no less varied than the flora. It is known to include more than 430 vertebrate species and about eight thousand invertebrates. In the forests as well as in the fields,

meadows and in the vicinity of reservoirs there are 73 species of mammal vertebrates including 6 species of artiodactyla (aurochs, European stag, elk, wild boar, roe, tarpan), 16 species of predatory beasts (brown bear, fox, wolf, lynx, marten, otter, etc.), 24 species of rodents (squirrel, beaver, grey hare, blue hare, mice, etc.), 15 species of bats, 10 species of insectivores (hedgehog, mole, desman, etc.), two species of lagomorpha. The kingdom of the feathered is represented by 286 species including 30 species in the order of geese, 36 — in the order of woodcocks, 14 — in the order of gulls, 26 — in the order of predatory birds, 108 — in the order of sparrows, etc. In the rivers and lakes there are 54 species of fish, the most common fish being the pike, roach, ide, krasnopjorka (Scardinius erythrophthalmus), tench, bleak, bream, crucian carp, loach, sheat, Güster (blicca bjoerkna), perch and others.

The Byelorussian nature, simple and not gaudy, has many sights that are beautiful in their simplicity and dear to a human soul. It is not by chance that a Russian writer of the past century wrote in his travel notes: "Byelorussia is a picturesque country abounding in lovely locations... where within every ten kilometres there are scenes and places ten times as beautiful as those of Switzerland". The alternation of hills and plains, rivers and lakes, marshes and forests, ploughlands and forests, roads and populated areas creates picturesqueness and harmony.

Mineral Resources. It was believed before the Revolution and later, even after the Great Patriotic War, that the mineral resources of the republic were not very rich and did not feature anything substantial except sand, clay, chalk and peat.

Only in 1941 in drilling the first deep borehole on the Pripjat depression geologists found what they could hardly expect — rock (common) salt. Later, after the war, in 1949 the Starobin deposit of potassium salt was discovered and, finally, oil blew out of a trial borehole in the south of the republic in November 1953. About thirty oil fields have been found

by now and oil is being produced in seventeen of them.

Phosphorites have also been discovered. Their reserves in Mogilev region run 400 000 000 tonnes. Bituminous and brown coals have been found in the Pripjat depression. Oil shales are also deposited there. Their reserves make up 11 billion tonnes. Iron ore beds have been revealed in the western areas.

It turned out that Byelorussia possesses considerable reserves of mineral waters. These are used for treating patients in many sanatoria. Thermal waters of the Matsesta type with a temperature of up to 85 °C have also been discovered.

Conservation of Nature. Like other union republics Byelorussia has passed the Nature Conservation Act, the Land, Water and Forest Resources Use Act, The Mineral Resources Code. The State Committee of the BSSR on Nature Conservation has been established and the Biosphere Scientific Board at the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences as well as the voluntary society for the protection of nature are functioning.

Owing to this an integrated system of state and public efforts is directed at rational use, recovery and increase of natural resources and conservation of water and air, soils and mineral resources, fauna and flora in good condition. Noise control — a drive for silence as a natural wealth and a factor of man's health and his fruitful work — is being pressed on the agenda.

Reserves. The creation of reserves and special nature reserves — inviolable standards of nature and scientific laboratories — is an important conservation measure. At present there are four reserves in Byelorussia: Berezina Reserve, Pripjat Reserve, Telekhani Reserve and Belovezhckaja Pushcha. Attempts to protect nature were made long ago. The Belovezhskaja Pushcha Conservation Act was approved as early as 1538. But it became a genuine reserve only under Soviet power. Since 1957 the pushcha has been a hunting reserve. Its regime is similar to that of a reserve,

the specificity consisting in a more profound study of the hunting fauna.

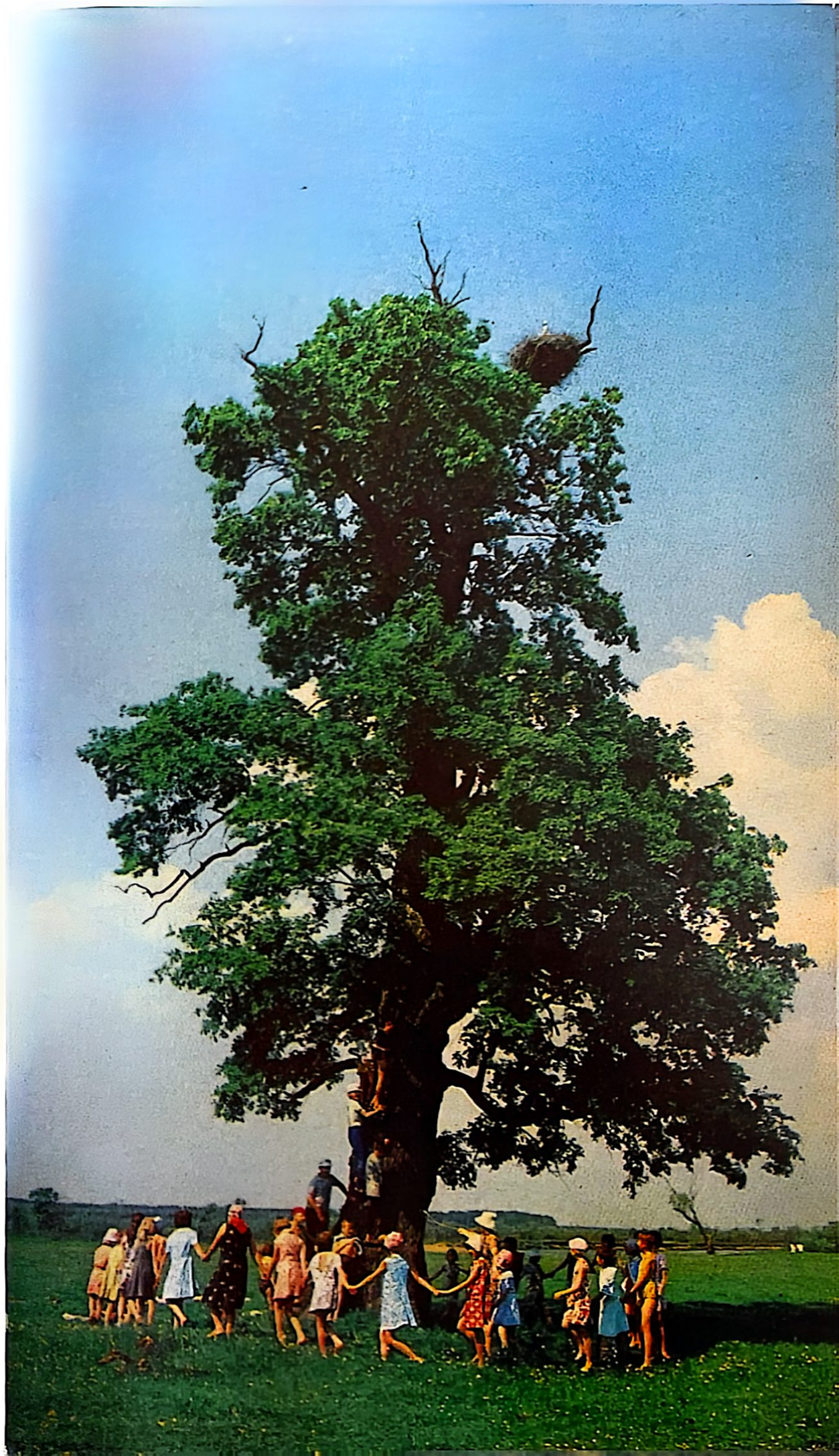
The Berezina Reserve is 150 kilometres away from Minsk within the upper reaches of the Berezina. It is 76 000 hectares in area. The water reserves, the flora and fauna are rich and varied. About 70 marsh-ridden forest rivers fall into the Berezina within the reserve. Three fourths of the territory are covered with forests. The old fir forests present a particular interest. Beavers, elks, roes, boars and European stags are under special protection. The bear, a most honoured animal in Byelorussia, once master but now a rare inhabitant of those forests, feels free in the reserve. There are about a hundred bears in the republic now and a fair third of them is on the Berezina. A few years ago five aurochs were brought to the reserve and now the herd numbers about a dozen and a half head.

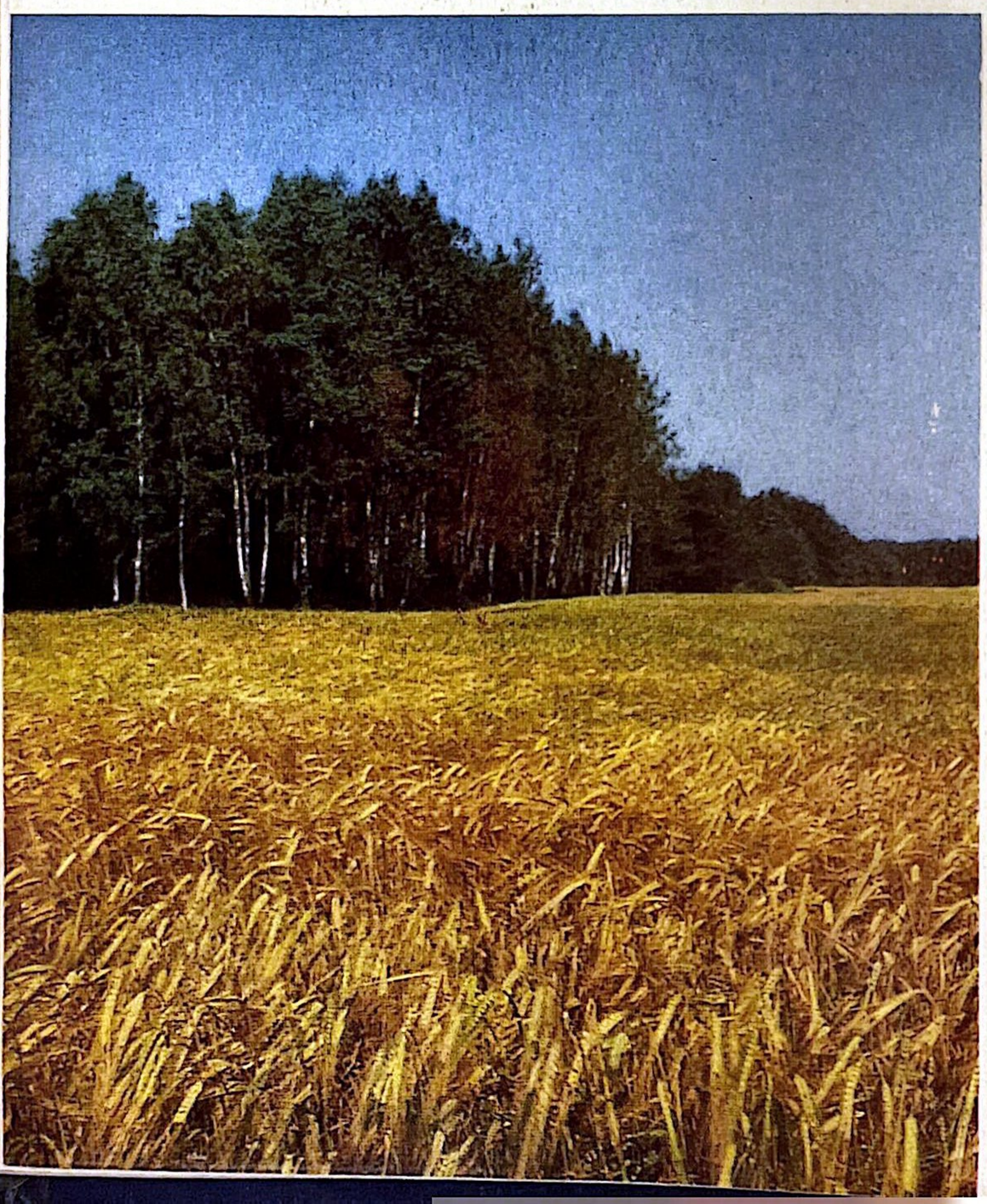
The Pripjat Reserve was created in the south-western part of Gomel region on the territory of 61500 hectares in area to protect and study landscapes typical of Polesye. Nearly four fifths of the territory are occupied by forests, about 15 per cent — by bogs and marshes, and the rest — by reservoirs and meadows. One can find there a combination of oak, pine, asp, black alder formations. The vegetation of marshes, water, forests, steppes and forest steppes is diverse. It includes hundreds of medicinal herbs. There are also rare animals such as grey crane, black-craw loon, grey heron.

The Telekhani Reserve — the second hunting reserve in the republic — was created to preserve Lake Vigonovskoje (26 sq km) and its unique flora and fauna. Another reserve is being contemplated in the region of Nalibokskaja Pushcha.

Special Nature Reserves. At present there are over 60 special reserves — hunting, hydrological, botanical, forest and other reserves. It is envisaged to establish a number of new special nature reserves and create some national parks.

Valuable plantations rare and century-old trees, old parks, rare geological outcrops, boulder and pebble conglomerates, boulders, rare beasts and birds are protected by the state as well. The Red Book of the BSSR has been instituted to promote conservation of rare, disappearing and insufficiently known plant and animal species.



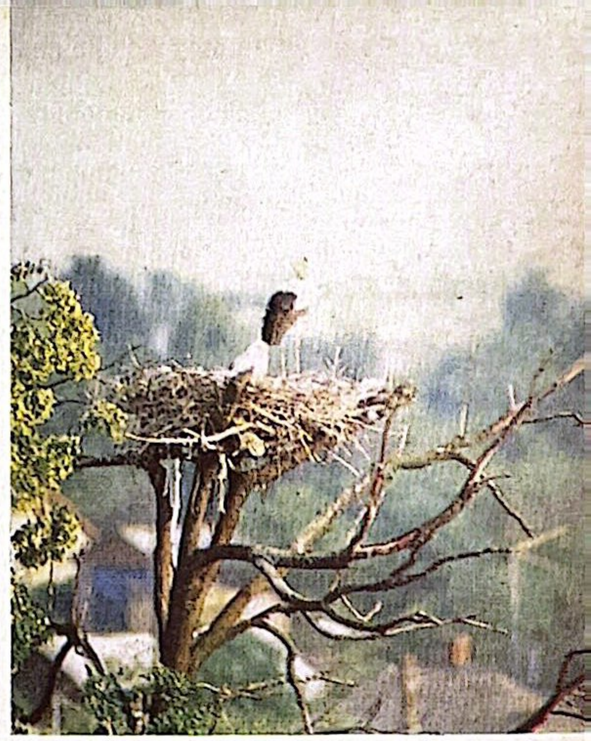


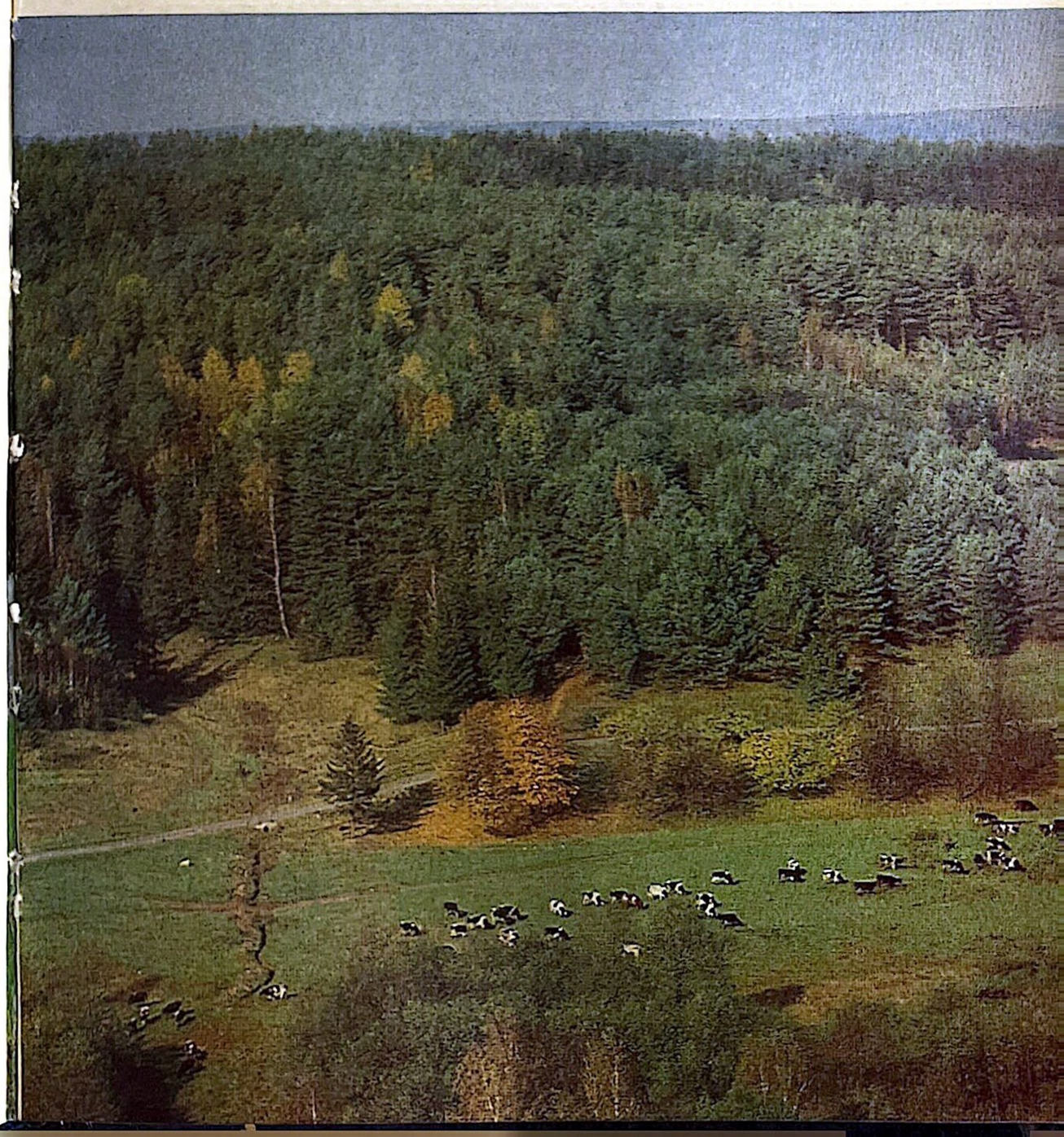
Spring breath of the Earth

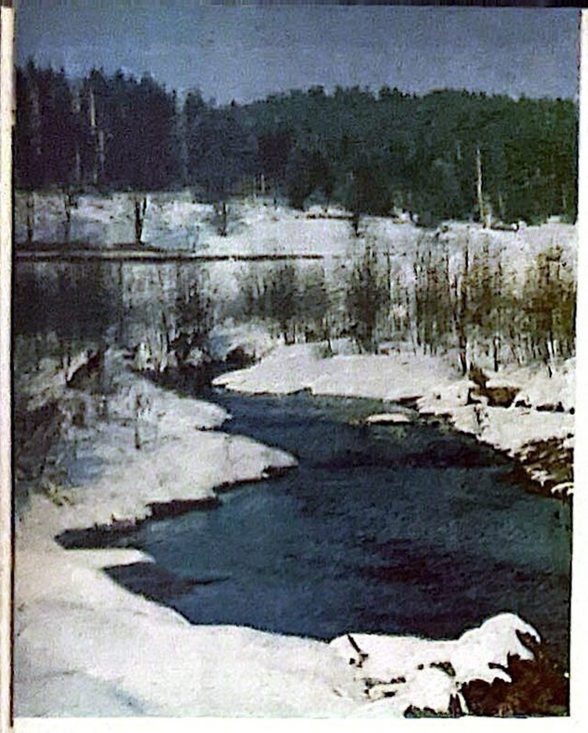
Native field

Herald of good fortune

Orscha-Mogilev plateau







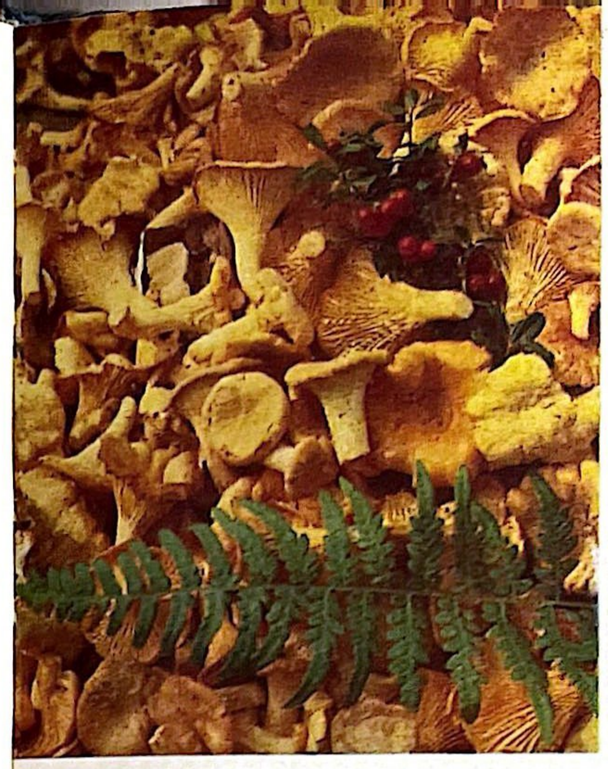
Life does not calm down
in the winter either

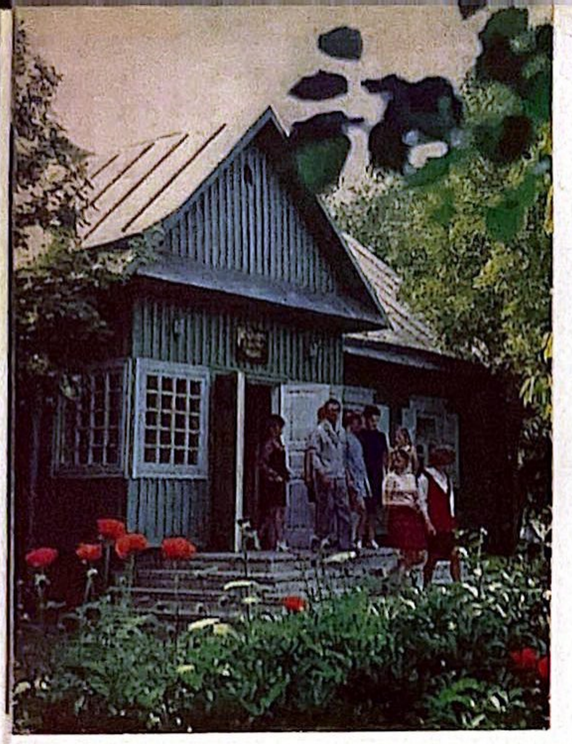
Fields in blossom

Forest fairytale

Child of the Byelorussian nature

Birch paradise





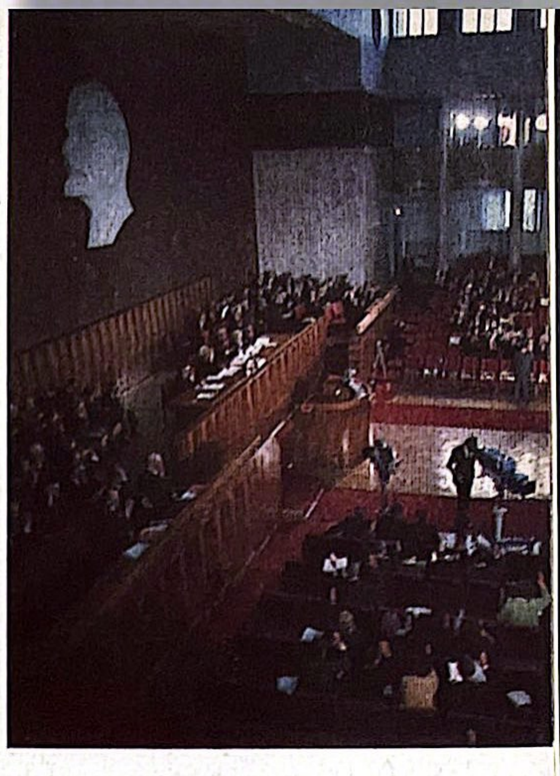
This is where the Party was born. The House-Museum of the 1st Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party in Minsk

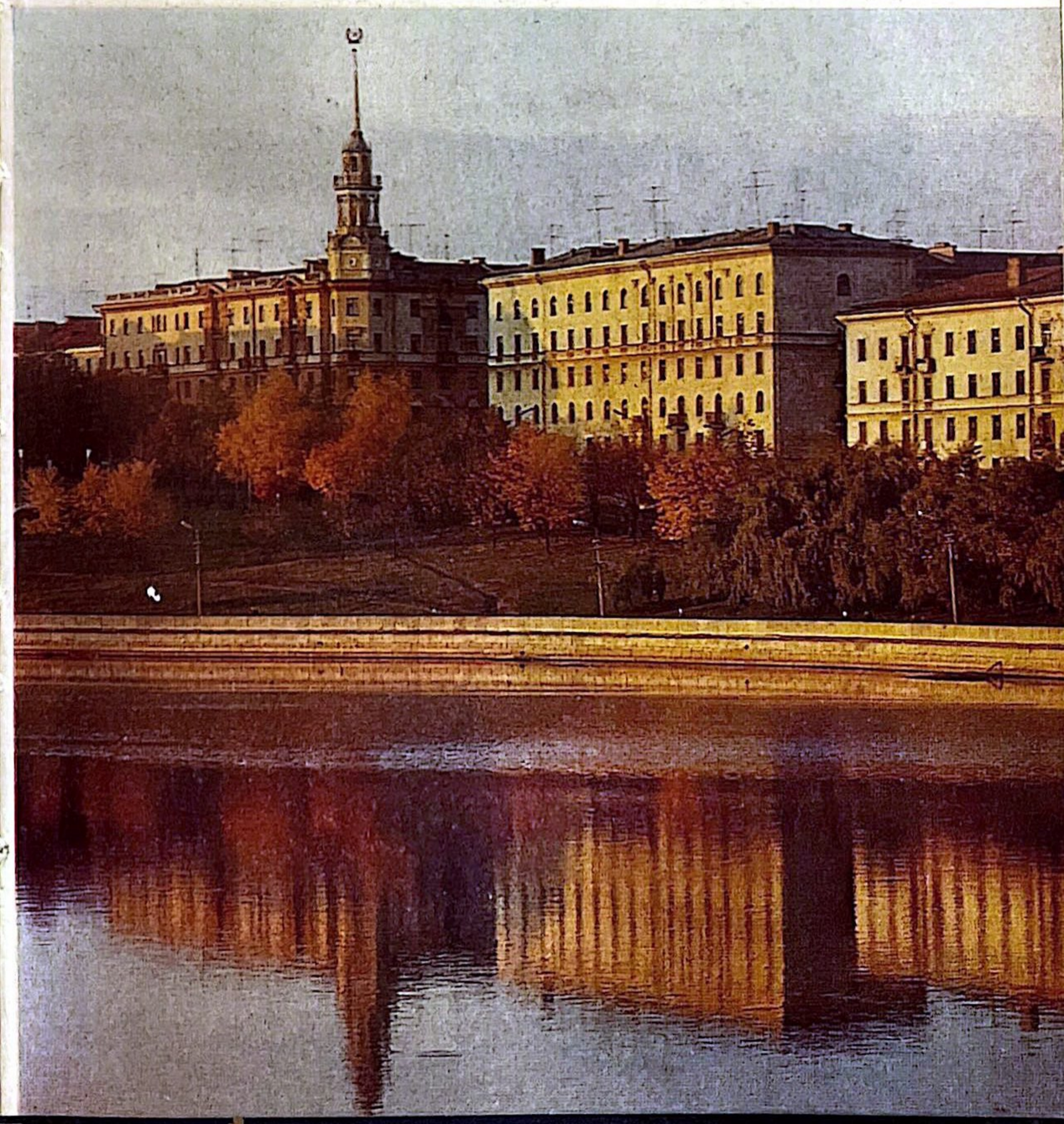
Victory Obelisk

Masherov Avenue

The Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR in session

Over the Svislotch



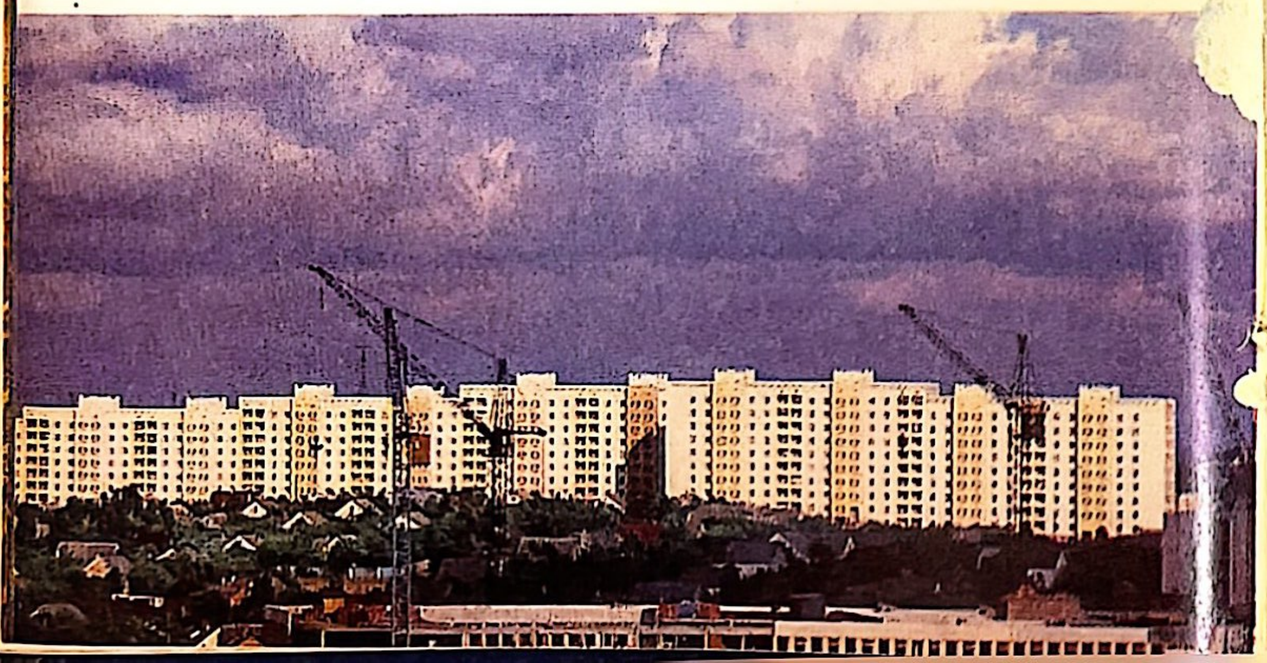


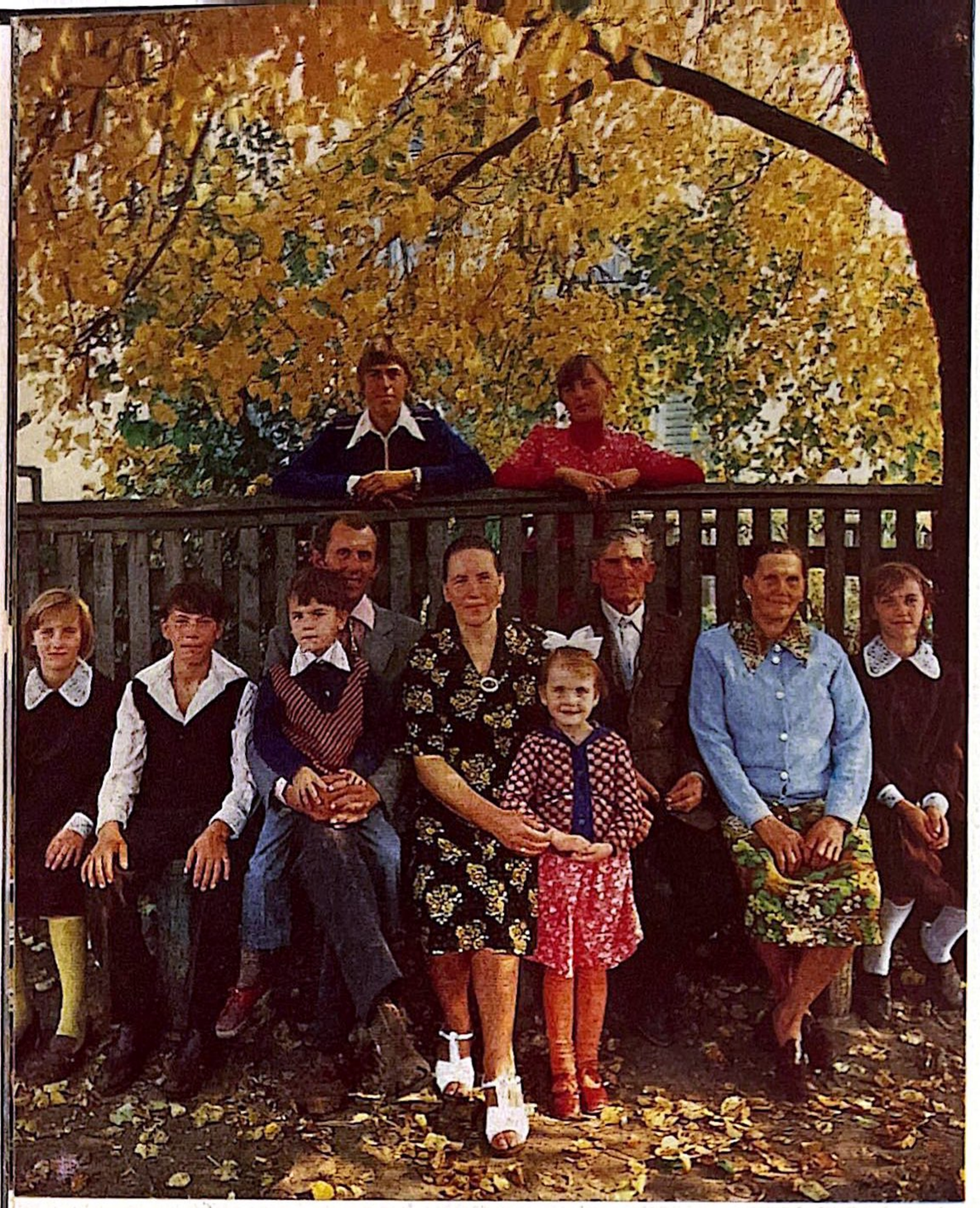
Joy of a cloudless childhood

New residential areas
in the Byelorussian capital
grow wider and taller

Daughter of Byelorussia

Twice Hero of the Soviet Union
pilot-cosmonaut V. V. Kovaljonok
with his mother Olga Ivanovna



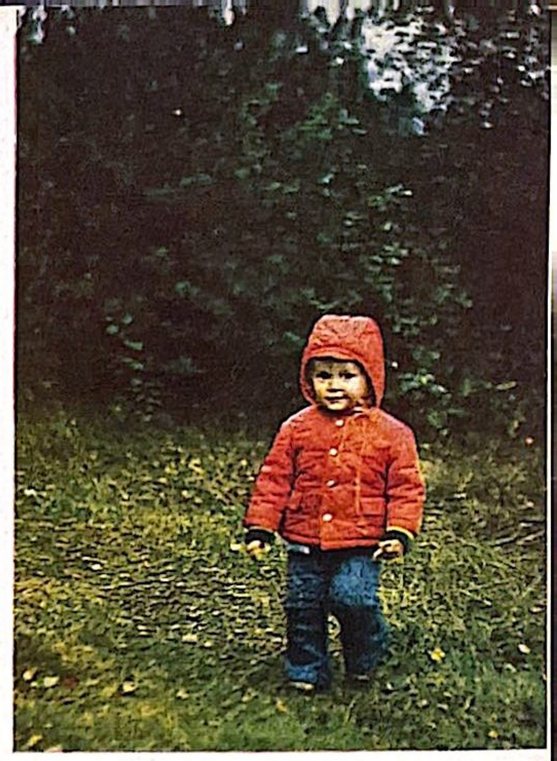


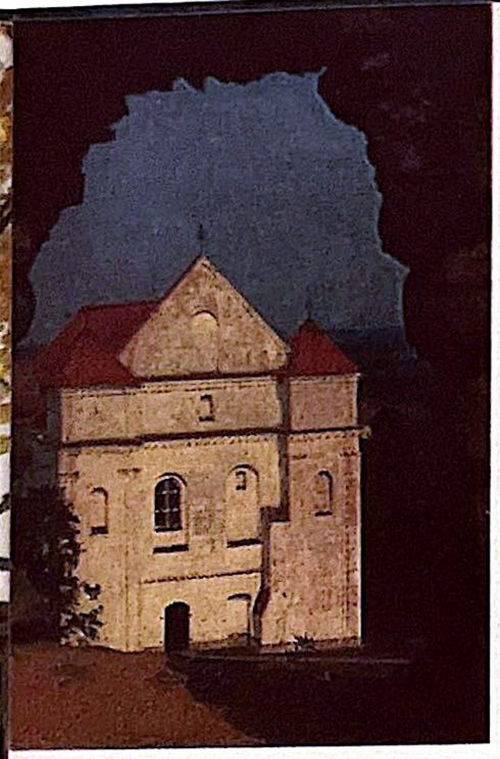
Happiness of a large family

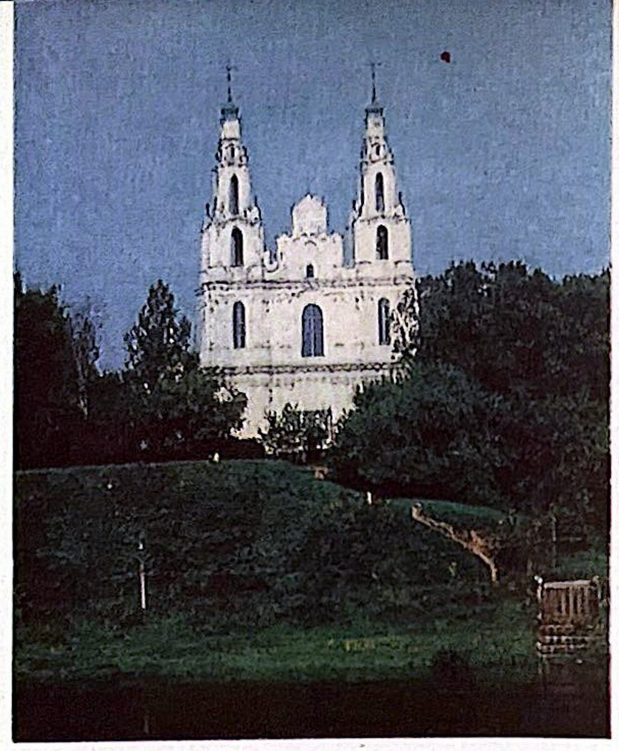
The Kanevich sisters —
Voronovo fine hands and singers

Outing

On a summer Sunday







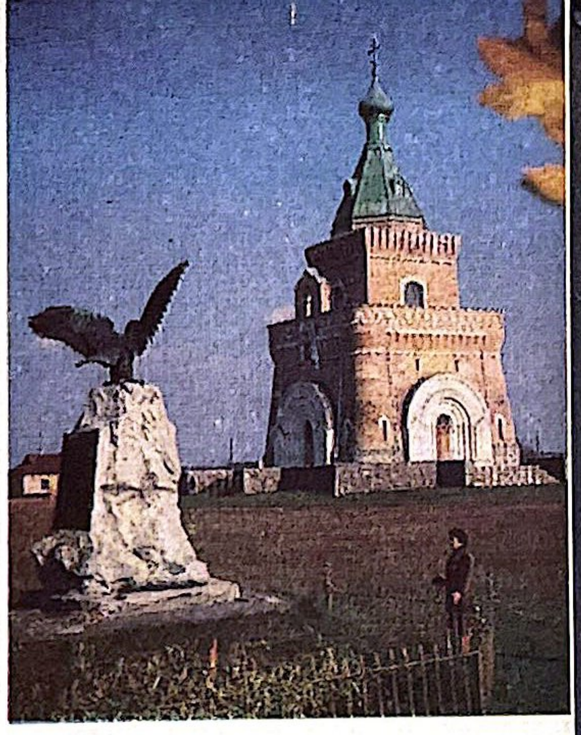
Catholic church where
A. Mickiewicz was baptized

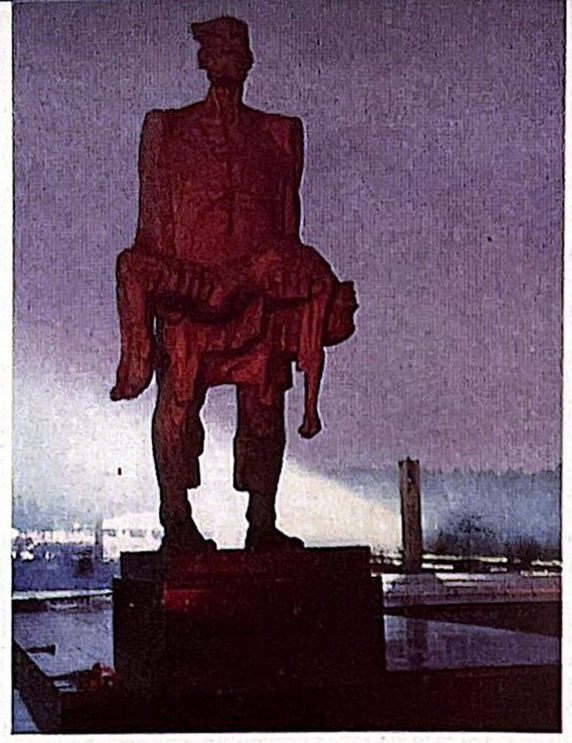
St. Sophia's Cathedral
(XI) in ancient Polotsk

On the Novogrudok hills

The monument and museum
in honor of the battle between
the regiments of Peter
the Great and the Swedes
in 1708 near the villaage of Lesnaja
in the Mogilev area

The interior of the Cathedral Church,
XVI—XVIII, Grodno





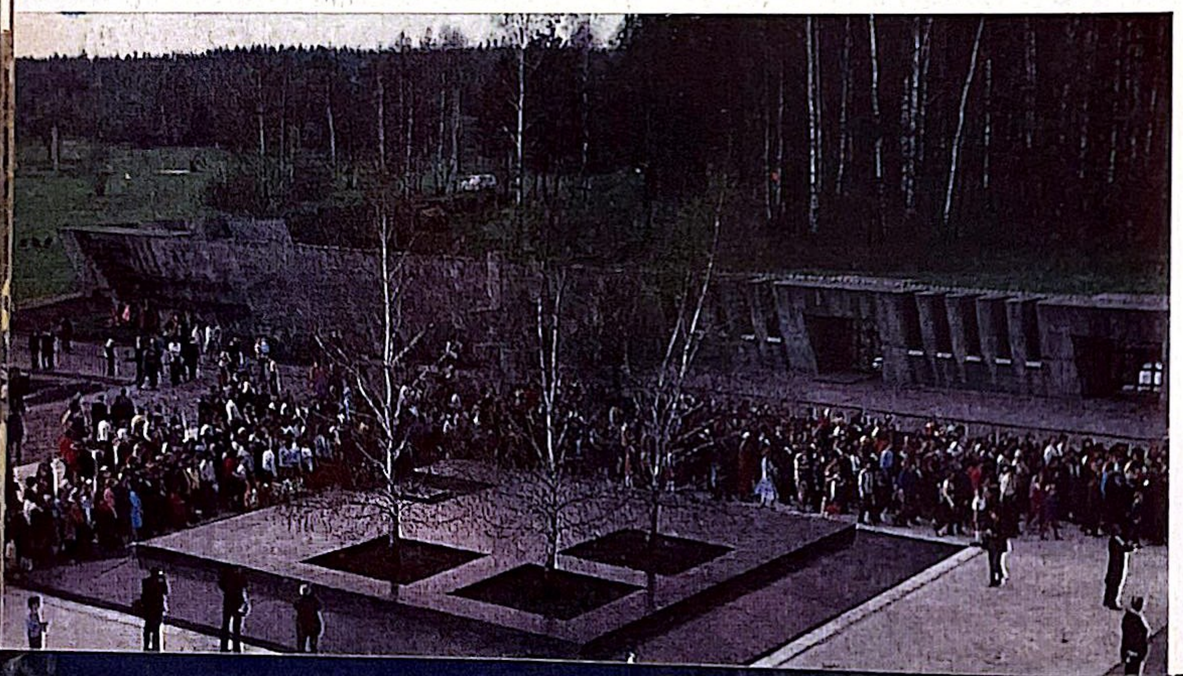
May the memory
of the heroes live for ever!
Garden in the town of Lojev

Grief of Khatyn

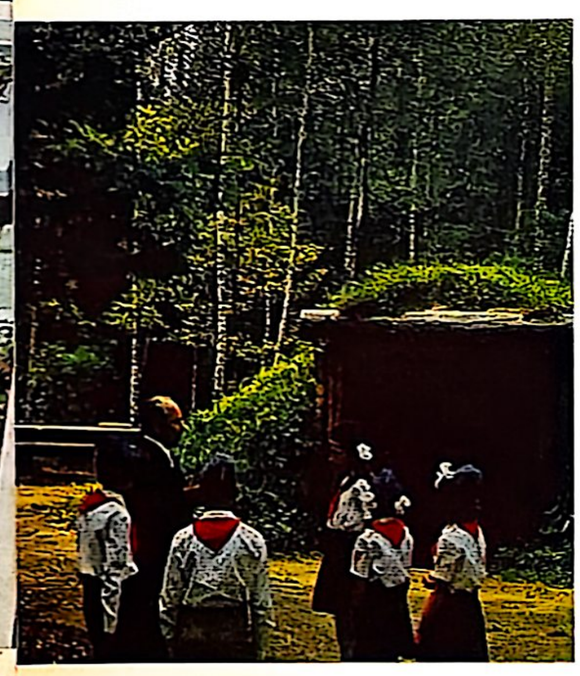
Every fourth was killed
in the war

Dalva — Khatyn's sister

Ruins of the Brest Hero-Fortress



Monument to a patriotic mother in Zhodino



There were partisan dug-outs here

The place above the Dnieper near Orsha where the first volleys of the "katusha" missile launchers were fired at the fascist aggressors on July 14, 1941

POPULATION

Number of Inhabitants. On January 1, 1982 the population of the BSSR was 9 800 000 people. By the number of inhabitants Soviet Byelorussia ranks fifth in the USSR, following Russia, the Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. While 0.92 per cent of the Union territory falls to the share of the BSSR, the share of its population is four times larger — 3.6 per cent.

Before the Great Patriotic War there were 9 200 000 people living within the contemporary boundaries of the BSSR. In the war years the Hitlerite invaders destroyed 2 200 000 inhabitants and prisoners of war and drove 380 000 people out to Reich for hard labour. Hundreds of thousands of inhabitants perished at the fronts in the active forces and in the enemy rear fighting underground as well as in resistance movement detachments. Over a million people were evacuated to the East. In 1945 the total population of the BSSR was less than 6 300 000 people or two thirds of the prewar number. It decreased in comparison with the last century. Byelorussia reached the prewar number of its population — 9200000 people — only by the beginning of 1973.

Owing to the progress of medicine as well as a rise in the prosperity and culture of the working people under the Soviet power the everall mortality has decreased more than twice and is one of the lowest in the world. Particularly significant is the reduction in child mortality. Before the Revolution one fifth of the new-born children — two hundred tots out of a thousand on an average — died in the first year. 58 out of

a thousand new-born children in 1950 did not live to be one year old, in 1960 — 35, in 1974 — 17, in 1980 — 16.3.

In modern Byelorussia the average life expectancy of population is high. It is nearly twice as high as it used to be (37.5 years) at the end of the last century. There are about a thousand long-lived inhabitants, that is people more than a hundred years old. Most of them are women.

According to the census taken on January 17, 1979 out of 9 560 000 inhabitants of the BSSR there were 5 168 000 women, or 53.5 per cent, and 4 492 000 men, or 46.5 per cent. This disproportion is due to the first and, especially, the second world wars. While the number of men and women was almost equal in 1913 the men's share fell to 44.5 per cent and the women's share rose to 55.5 per cent in 1959. The gap is gradually closing now. Women in Byelorussia make up half the workers in towns and villages. Conventionally the women's sectors have been and remain trade, catering, medical care, cultural and educational work.

Social composition (per cent)

	1939	1959	1970	1979
Total population	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Workers	22.8	36.3	52.8	55.8
Collective farmers	57.1 [1]	48.5	28.2	21.3
Office workers	13.6	14.5	18.8	22.8
Others	6.4	0.7	0.2	0.1

[1] including 2.1 per cent of cooperated handicraftsmen

The number of people employed in the national economy is growing. In 1970 it made up 4 299 655, in 1979 — 4 981 753.

Before the Revolution eight Byelorussians out of ten (excluding preschool-age children) could not read or write. Illiteracy was completely eliminated in the 40s and the educational level of the people both in towns and villages is rising quickly. 5 200 000 people

have higher and secondary education (complete or incomplete). The number of diplomated specialists exceeds 1 100 000.

National Composition. Like all the Soviet republics Byelorussia is a multinational country. Representatives of more than 80 nations and ethnic groups resided on its territory at the time of the 1979 census. The major part of the population is represented by the indigenous nation — Byelorussians. In 1979 they made up 7 568 000 out of 9 532 000 residents of the BSSR. In 1897 the share of Byelorussians accounted for 78.2 per cent of the entire population. It accounts for 79.4 per cent now. They represent the majority in all the regions, districts and populated areas.

Byelorussians live not only in the BSSR but also in all the union republics and many states of the world. A mass of them had to leave their quarters before the Revolution because of land shortage in the rural areas and lack of jobs in the near-by towns. In search of jobs they made for the centre of Russia, Siberia, the south of the Ukraine (preferably for the Donbass area), the Baltic and Petrograd. The outflow of Byelorussians from the Russian Empire, mostly to North America, was powerful too, emigration from Western Byelorussia occupied by Poland continuing till September 1939. In all, about a million people left Byelorussia for other countries before the Second World War. At present hundreds of thousands of Byelorussians live in the USA, Canada, Australia, Poland, France, Argentina, in a number of other states of Latin America and Western Europe. Living in foreign lands many of them do not lose touch with their homeland.

The number of Byelorussians who went to live in other parts of our country is great too. According to the 1926 census there were 722 000 Byelorussians in the Soviet Union who resided outside the BSSR, including 250 000 in the European part of the RSFSR and 320 000 in Siberia. In a number of regions of Siberia they accounted for over 15 per cent of the population. In virtue of the propinquity and kindred with

the Russian people the Byelorussians, whenever in a Russian environment, adopt the Russian customs, traditions, ways, psychology and language quickly and easily. Among those who left the republic for Yaroslavl area were the parents of Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman astronaut.

By the state of population on January 17, 1979 the number of Byelorussians in the USSR totalled 9 463 000 people. 7 568 000 lived in the BSSR, the other 1 895 000 in other union republics, nations and most ethnic groups of our Motherland live and work in the BSSR. The second largest Slavic group in number and share is represented by Russians. They make up 1 140 000 people or 11.9 per cent of the population. They are followed by Poles — 403 000 or 4.2 per cent, Ukrainians — 235 000 or 2.4 per cent.

There are 135 000 Jews and nearly 11 000 Tatars. On January 17, 1979 there were also 8408 Gipsies, 6993 Lithuanians, 2923 Moldavians, 2751 Armenians, 2654 Azerbaijanians, 2617 Letts, 2451 Germans, 2333 Uzbeks, 2243 Chuvashes, 2063 Mordvinians, 1659 Georgians, 1355 Kazakhs, 770 Karelians, 742 Estonians, 622 Ossets, 458 Kirgizes, 383 Tajiks, 170 Turkmens, etc. There are even representatives of rather small ethnic groups almost unknown until recently: Abazinians and Tofalars, Orochians and Darginians, Lakians and Gagauzians, Tabasarans and Ulchians, Rutuls and Vepsians, Kumyks and many others. They are all equal members of the united and unanimous Soviet family.

The representatives of various nations living and working in the BSSR adopt the Byelorussian culture. It is of interest that over three hundred thousand people of other nationalities, alongside the prevailing majority of Byelorussians, also regard Byelorussian as their mother tongue. Meanwhile, 16.5 per cent of Byelorussians indicated Russian as their mother tongue during the census.

Density. The average density of the Byelorussian population is 47.3 people per sq km. It is nearly four times as high as in the whole of the Union (12.0 people

per sq km) and twice as high as in the USA but 5 to 6 times lower than in Japan, West Germany and England.

The population density is not the same in different places. In Rossony district in the north it is less than 10 people per sq km, in other places it reaches 100 people. The highest density is in the industrial areas. In the last ten years the rural population has decreased by 880 000 people. While its share accounted for 86 per cent of the entire Byelorussian population in 1913 it fell at 40 per cent on January 1, 1983.

Villages. Before the Great Patriotic War the republic numbered about a hundred thousand villages and separated farm-steads. In the years of the nazi occupation 9200 villages were burned down. Many of them, burnt together with their residents, like Khatyn, never revived after the war. The number of villages was also considerably reduced in setting up large central estates of state and collective farms. There were 34 442 rural settlements left by 1959, in 1980 — 26 150. In perspective it is envisaged to bring the number of rural settlements to 3—5 thousand transforming them into town-type rural housing estates.

Destiny of Boroughs. For centuries boroughs were a kind of settlements in Byelorussia which took an intermediate position between a town and a village. They incorporated orthodox and catholic churches, synagogues, taverns and inns. By the end of the 19th century Byelorussia had about three hundred boroughs. They were inhabited by the handicraft and village poor and were generally called "dirty boroughs". After the Revolution most boroughs were named villages and part of them were transformed into towns or town-type settlements. There are 112 settlements now, including 95 town settlements, 16 workers' towns and one health-resort settlement — Naroch.

Towns. The oldest town in the Byelorussian land is Polotsk. It appeared as a fortified settlement, a handicraft and trade centre on the Western Dvina in 862. The second oldest town was Vitebsk which came into

existence in 974. The third was Turov (980) in Polesje. Then at the end of the 10th century there appeared Izjaslavl (now called Zaslavl). These were followed by Brest (1019), Kopys (1059), Braslav (1065), Minsk (1067), Orscha (1067), etc.

Over fifty towns sprang up in Byelorussia in IX—XIV centuries. They had different destinies. Some towns grew stronger and flourished. They are now big economic and cultural centres. Others, such as Golatichesk, Drutsk, Nekolotch, Luchin, Belchitsi, Turijsk, Zditov, Lukoml, were raided and burned down in wars and disappeared from the face of the earth. Several of them returned to life as little-known hamlets afterwards.

There were only 36 towns in Byelorussia at the beginning of the 20th century. The number of them began to grow quickly after the Revolution. In 1939 they already numbered 65. They were nearly all badly ruined by the nazis in the war.

About four dozens of new towns appeared on the map of the Byelorussian SSR in the postwar period. Part of them sprang up right in the open country or amid forests together and side by side with the young giants of modern industry. These are Novopolotsk, Soligorsk, Svetlogorsk, Beloozersk, Zhodino, Novolukoml,...

The same period saw the rehabilitation of the ancient Minsk, Vitebsk, Gomel, Mogilev... Reconstructed from ruins they grew wider, more comortable and beautiful.

All these towns — both young and old — develop according to plans as economic and cultural centres which are convenient for life, work, study and rest. They know no slums or pollution, unemployment or unchecked crimes.

The pride of the Byelorussian working people is the capital — ancient Minsk situated on the small river Svisloch. It appeared as a fortress of Polotsk Principality in 1067. Then it was the centre of Minsk Principality and, later, of Minsk Province. Minsk was the town where the 1st Congress of the Russian Social Democra-

tic Workers, Party was held in 1898. The Soviet power was established in the town on the first day of the October Revolution — October 25 (November 7), 1917. During 1100 days in the years of the Great Patriotic War courageous struggle was going on in the occupied town between the Soviet patriots and the fascists. Thousands of Minsk inhabitants were active in the underground and in partisan detachments. For the great feat of amrs the town was favoured the title of a Hero City.

Minsk which was reduced to ashes in the war literally revived from ruins and ashes in a surprisingly short period of peace. It is a general impression that Minsk is now one of the most beautiful towns of Europe. Before the war its population ran to 240 thousand people. It makes up 1 400 000 now.

Minsk is a big political, economic, scientific and cultural centre of the country. Its enterprises provide over one fourth of the Byelorussian industrial output, the leading industry being multisectoral mechanical engineering. The developed industries also include light, food, wood-working, chemical, building materials and printing industries. Minsk is a big junction of railways, highways and airlines.

The capital numbers 191 schools providing general education, 33 vocational technical schools, 23 secondary special educational institutions. More than 97 000 students study at the 14 higher educational institutions — at the Byelorussian University, Conservatory, Higher Party School, Polytechnical Institute, Teacher's Training College, Medical Institute, Hheatre and Arts Institute and other colleges.

Here we find the Academy of Sciences of the BSSR and over fifty sectoral research institutes, 204 popular libraries, as well as the State Library of the BSSR, the government library, the fundamental libraries of the Academy of Sciences and the Byelorussian State University, hundreds of school and special libraries. There are 10 book publishers and one newspaper and magazine publishing house issuing 33 newspapers and 31 magazines.

The spiritual life of Minsk is essentially represented by the unions of writers, composers, painters, architects, cinema workers, journalists, the theatrical society. There are seven theatres, a circus, a philharmonic, five big concert halls, 26 cinemas. Also functioning are the Exhibition of Economic Achievements of the BSSR and the Palace of Arts which is a permanent place for art exhibitions. Many interesting and valuable documents on the history and culture of the Byelorussian people are kept in 15 museums: Museum of the Great Patriotic War, Museum-House of the 1st Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers, Party, Museum of Regional Studies, Art Museum, Museum of Ancient Byelorussian Culture, Museum of National Art, Museum of National Architecture and Life, literature museums — those of Yanka Kupala, Yakub Kolas and Maxim Bogdanovich, Geological Museum and others.

There are 20 stadiums, 22 winter swimming-pools, 380 gymnasiums, 36 tennis-courts, 3 big palaces of sports. 22 hospital complexes, 105 dispensaries and polyclinics and a number of other medical establishments watch over the health of the inhabitants. There are 14 hotels.

After the war Minsk occupied an area of about 40 sq km, now it is more than 194 sq km in area. Within the town there are 1730 hectares of green plantations — parks, gardens, four artificial lakes. The town is growing bigger and more comfortable. The new housing estates primarily spring up in the western, southwestern and northern suburbs.

The radial system of the principal highways that was formed in the past is being transformed into a more convenient radial-circular system. Seven layout district centres are now being developed along the second beltway of the town. The main composition axes which determine the town development are Lenin Avenue and Masherov Avenue. The principal architectural ensemble of Minsk is being formed in its historical centre — in the vicinity of Lenin Square, Freedom Square and Central Square.

Utmost care is taken at that to preserve the old relics and monuments: Catherine Church (1612), Bernardine Nunnery and Bernardine Monastery (1642), Jesuit Church (1656) and others, as well as the buildings that accommodated the revolutionary committees of the October period and the secret addresses of the underground organization members in the years of the nazi occupation. The restoration of the Trinity Suburb including 33 buildings — a monument of the town development and architecture of the 18th century — is in full swing in the centre of Minsk. Large-scale restoration is contemplated in the former Upper Town (XVI) near the present-day Freedom Square.

In building and renovating the town its layout and architecture are combined with monumental art, painting and sculpture. Monuments to K. Marx, V. I. Lenin, F. E. Dzerzhinsky, M. I. Kalinin, A. M. Gorky, Yanka Kupala, Yakub Kolas, Maxim Bogdanovich, E. K. Tsiolkovsky, S. I. Gritsevets, Hero of the Soviet Union, an obelisk to the soldiers and partisans of the Great Patriotic War and other monuments have been erected.

The second largest town in Byelorussia is **Gomel.** It is one of the most beautiful region centres of the republic, a port of the Sozh (a tributary of the Dnieper), a big railway junction and an industrial centre. Gomel is covered with glorious revolutionary, battle and labour traditions. When the Great Patriotic War broke out the soldiers of the Red Army and the home guard were staunchly defending the town.

There are 18 engineering plants, including "Gomselmash", a machine-tool plant, "Tsentrolit", a starting engine plant, a bearing plant, a measuring instrument plant, a ship-building yard, an electrical equipment plant, a hydraulic drive plant, etc. There is also a number of big enterprises of the chemical, wood-working, food, knitted fabric, tailoring and footwear industries.

Alongside a broad network of schools providing general education, vocational schools, secondary training institutions there is a university, an institute of railway transport engineers, a cooperative institute and a

polytechnical institute. The scientific establishments include Institute for Mechanics of Metal-Polymer System (BSSR Academy of Sciences), Finite Group Laboratory of Mathematics Institute (BSSR Academy of Sciences), Forestry Research Institute, etc.

There is a drama theatre, a puppet-show, a circus, a philharmonic, 6 cimemas, a museum of local lore, 92 popular libraries, 4 palaces of culture, 42 clubs and houses of culture. The recreation park named after Lunacharsky laid out on the high bank of the Sozh in the last century, including an old palace, Peter and Paul's Cathedral and other structures built a little earlier, is a decoration of the town. The Church of St. Elijah (1793) is an interesting monument of wood architecture.

The river and the abundance of verdure make Gomel particularly picturesque and suitable for rest for the townsfolk and guests.

Vitebsk. This town on the Western Dvina was founded in 974. It was a trade centre on the way "from Varangians to Greeks". In 1796 it became the centre of Byelorussian Province and in 1802 — Vitebsk Province. Soviet power was established here two days after the Revolution was victorious in Petrograd. During the war there was a strong resistance movement which dealt telling blows at the fascists.

Textile and tailoring enterprises take the leading place in the economy of Vitebsk, but the town is also a centre of the machine-tool industry represented by four plants. There is also a number of radio engineering and electrical engineering plants, as well as a developed food industry and a building materials industry.

The town numbers 48 schools, 8 vocational schools, 10 technical schools, 4 higher educational institutions — veterinary, pedagogical, medical and technological. There is an affiliated branch of Solid-State Physics Institute (BSSR Academy of Sciences). There are six cinemas, 24 clubs, botanical gardens, two museums — Museum of Regional Studies and Memorial Museum of M. F. Shmyrjov, commmander of a guerrilla brigade, Hero of the Soviet Union. The Byelorussian Theatre

named after Ya. Kolas plays an essential part in the cultural life of the city and the whole of the region.

The only architectural monuments of the past that survived in Vitebsk are the Town Hall (XVIII) and the Governor's Palace which was built in the classicism traditions before 1772. The architectural aspect of the town took shape entirely after the war.

The youngest regional centre in Byelorussia is **Mogilev** founded in the 13th century. Its history is full of fighting against all sorts of oppressors. The inhabitants of Mogilev added particularly glorious pages to the heroic chronicle of their town during the Great Patriotic War. The defense of the city in July 1941 lasted 25 days. When the town was occupied by the nazis the patriots formed a committee to assist the Red Army and then fighting underground organization.

The war-ravaged town was reconstructed in the days of peace, grew considerably larger and became a big industrial centre of the republic. Now it is primarily a chemical city incorporating "Chemical Fibres", one of the largest amalgamations in the country. It is also known as a town of mechanical engineering workers. Its enterprises turn out motor vehicles, lifts, constructions machines, motors. It is also an important centre of food and light industries.

There are three training institutes: teachers' training, mechanical engineering and technological, and also affiliated branches of two institutes of the BSSR Academy of Sciences — Physics Institute and Physico-technical Institute. There are two theatres (drama and puppet), a muesum of regional studies, a large library, 33 clubs, 25 motion-picture installations, and also branches of the unions of writers, painters, journalists, architects and of the theatrical society.

Mogilev is situated on the Dnieper, the river of three Slav nations — Russian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian. It develops on the basis of radial-circular system of highways. The new big housing estates spring up on the high bank of the river.

Grodno. The inhabitants of this ancient town on the Niemen remember the Polish occupation, the sanguina-

ry years of the nazi invasion. The aggressors brought the town to decline and destruction. One can hardly recognize the old town now. There are new buildings, blocks of houses, housing estates, new plants, factories, groups of enterprises, new schools, shops, hospitals, theatres.

There are over fifty enterprises in the city.The light industry incorporating textile, tailoring, leather and shoe enterprises leads in the output of products. The chemical industry turns out mineral fertilizers and synthetic fibres. Mechanical engineering is also building up its production rates.

Under Soviet power Grodno has become an important cultural centre. The town numbers eight secondary training special institutions, three higher educational institutions — a university, a medical college and an agricultural institute. The scientific research is represented by the Department of Metabolism Regulation (BSSR Academy of Sciences). There is a historical and archaeological museum, House-Museum of the woman writer E. Ozheshko, a drama theatre, a zoo.

The left-whole monuments of history and culture in Grodno are more numerous than in other towns. Among them are castles, an old (XI) and a new one (XVIII), Bernardine, Bridget, Franciscan Churches (XVII).

Brest. Few towns had to experience so many wars and battles as ancient Brest located on the way of military campaigns. It was founded as a fortress in 1019. The town met the treacherous attack of the nazis like a hero warrior and its feat entered into the world history for good.

Now Brest is a peaceful toiling city, a railway and highway junction, a river port on the Mukhavets, an airport, the industrial, cultural and administrative centre of the region.

Formerly in Brest there were only small semihandicraft enterprises. Now there are over 30 large amalgamations, groups of enterprises, plants and factories. Many of them are of the union nmportance. These include the electric bulb and electromechanical plants,

the electrical measuring instrument plant and the gas equipment plant.

The educational system comprises 49 preschool children's establishments, 29 schools, providing general education, 6 vocational schools, 4 technical schools, 2 institutes — a teachers' training college and an institute of civil engineers. There were three libraries in Brest before 1939. Now popular libraries alone run to 48. There are two theatres (drama and puppet), seven cinemas, 27 clubs and houses of culture, two museums. The memorial complex "Brest Hero Fortress" and the heroic defense museum are famous all over the world. There are branches of the Painters' Union and Journalists' Union, a literary society.

HISTORY

Byelorussia's history is rich and its culture is ancient. Man came to Byelorussian land after the enormous Dnieper freeze preceding the advance of the last Valdai glacier which covered only the northern part of today' s Byelorussian territory. All this took place 100—40 thousand years ago.

The Past. East-Slav tribes of Krivichi, Dregovichi and Radimichi were Byelorussian people's ancestors who settled around the Polota (a Western Dvina tributary) and were later named Polochane. In the first half of the IX century Turov and Polotsk principalities were set up on Dregovichi and Polochane territories. They were the first state-like formations on Byelorussian land which eventually, at the end of the same century, were united with the Kievan Russ.

Having become part of a powerful feudal state with Kiev as the capital, East-Slav tribes made up a single old Russian nation (IX—XI cent) with a common language, culture and customs. In the XII century the Kievan Russ split into separate principalities which, fighting the Tatar-Mongols, German and Swedish invaders independently, suffered heavy losses. Taking advantage of this fact the Lithuanian princes subdued the western lands of the old Russ (XII—XIV cent) and set up the Great Lithuanian Principality. Having been united into one state, the Slavs and Lithuanians became strong enough to give rebuff to German knights. In 1410 the Teuton Order of crusader knights suffered a heavy defeat in the battle of Grünwald.

In 1569 the Polish-Lithuanian Unia was signed in Lublin with the result that the Great Lithuanian Principality, Byelorussian lands included, became part of the Rzecz Pospolita, a federal Polish state.

In the XIV—XVI centuries kindred nations into which the Kievan Russ had fallen formed Russian, Ukranian and Byelorussian nationalities whose cultural, linguistic and customary traditions were very much alike.

Belaya Russ. The term "Belaya Russ' was for the first time used in the XII century. Up to the XV century it was also common in north-east Russ. Lands which are the republic's territory today were originally called "Belaya Russ" in the XIV century and the name stuck to these lands alone. The origin of the name, however, has so far never been precised. Some researchers put it down to the white colour of the local peasants everyday linen clothes and to their fair hair. Others associate it with the direct meaning of the word "belyi" which is clean, non-occupied, free, independent and therefore presume that old Russ lands which had not been captured either by Tatar-Mongols or Lithuania were called "Belaya Russ" in those early days. Still others maintain that Belaya Russ was the land inhabited by christians unlike Chernaya Russ where pagans lived. There are also other versions of the name's origin.

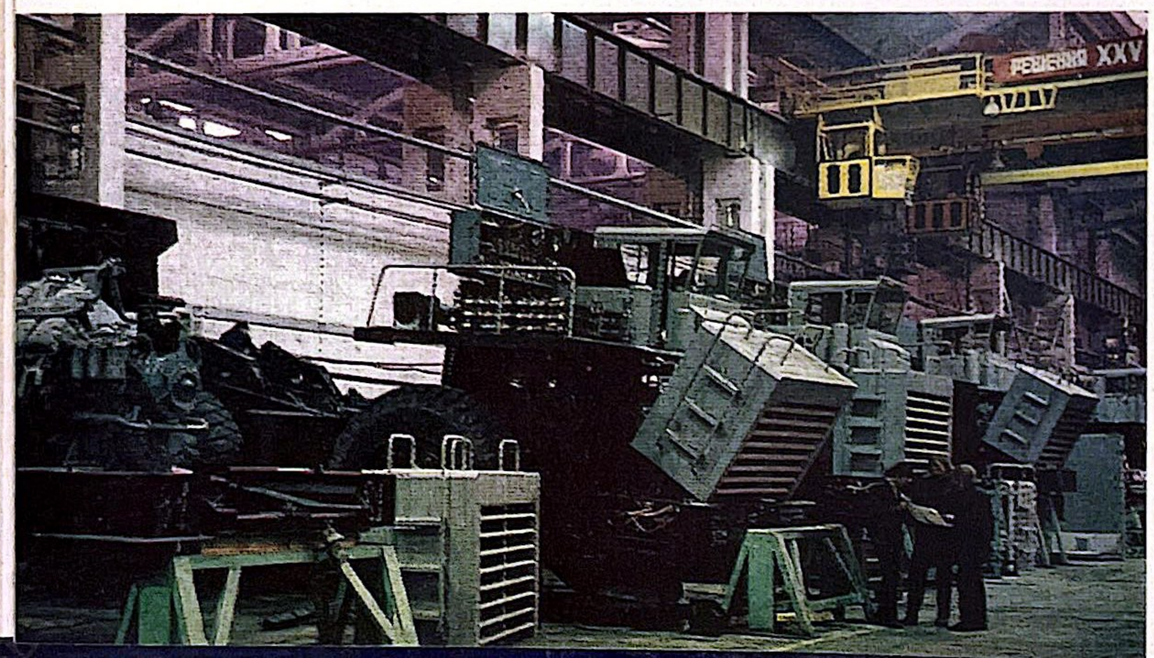
For many centuries Byelorussians had to staunchly and courageously fight for their independence, their own language, culture and national way of life. Byelorussia was many a time invaded and occupied by numerous aggressors but with the help of her Russian and Ukranian brothers she threw off the foreign oppression yoke in the end. And when need arose Byelorussian pepole were ready to lend a helping hand to the neighbours.

Many Byelorussian towns, such as Polotsk, Brest, Minsk and others were known both as military fortifications and as big political and economic centres. They traded vigorously with Russians, Ukrainians, the countries of Western Europe, Byzantium and the Medi-

terranean states. Along with national economy spiritual culture flourished in Byelorussia. Such great enlighteners and humanists as Nicholas Gusowski, George Scorina, Symon Budny made a profound contribution to its development. As far back as in the first quarter of the XVI century George Scorina started book-printing business setting up Byelorussia's first print-house in Wilno. Print-houses were presently opened in Nesvizh, Brest, Losk and other towns of Byelorussia. Schools and culture-and-education brotherhoods appeared at the same epoch. The Byelorussian language was widely used in diplomacy and home business correspondence of the Great Lithuanian Principality.

Reunification with Russia. The working people of Byelorussia and the country's most prominent representatives would never for a moment stop fighting home and foreign feudals, nationalist-religious oppression. They would unswervingly yearn to unite with the brotherly Russian and Urkainian nations. The numerous insurrections which later turned into a nation-wide war for liberation are a good evidence to it. Yet, it was not until the late XVIII century that after a severe struggle with foreign invaders did Byelorussia reunite with Russia. The reunification stimulated further development of economy and culture, played a progressive role in the history of Byelorussian people.

Like all nations of the Russian empire, Russians including, Byelorusssians had it very hard under the tsarist autocracy. Social oppression was redoubled by nationalist yoke. The Byelorussian language was refuted by the autocracy and was actually forbidden. Over eighty per cent of Byelorussia's population were illiterate. Higher educational establishments did appear in certain towns but they were closed down as unnecessary, having existed 5—15 years. Byelorussian people were not a single nation and lived in separate provinces. This could do but harm to the nation since western provinces of Russia which incorporated some of Byelorussian lands were notably behind the coutry's industrial centres so far as national economy was concerned.



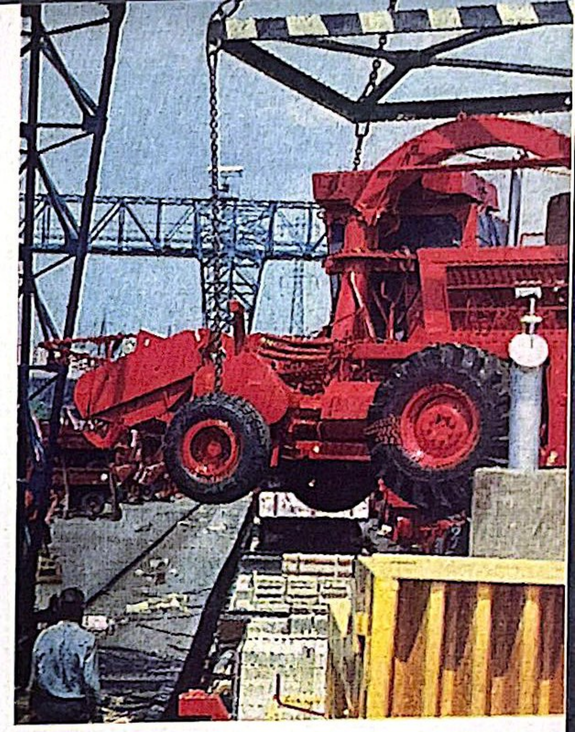
Zhodino giants

MAZ lorries
on the production line
of the Minsk Motor Works

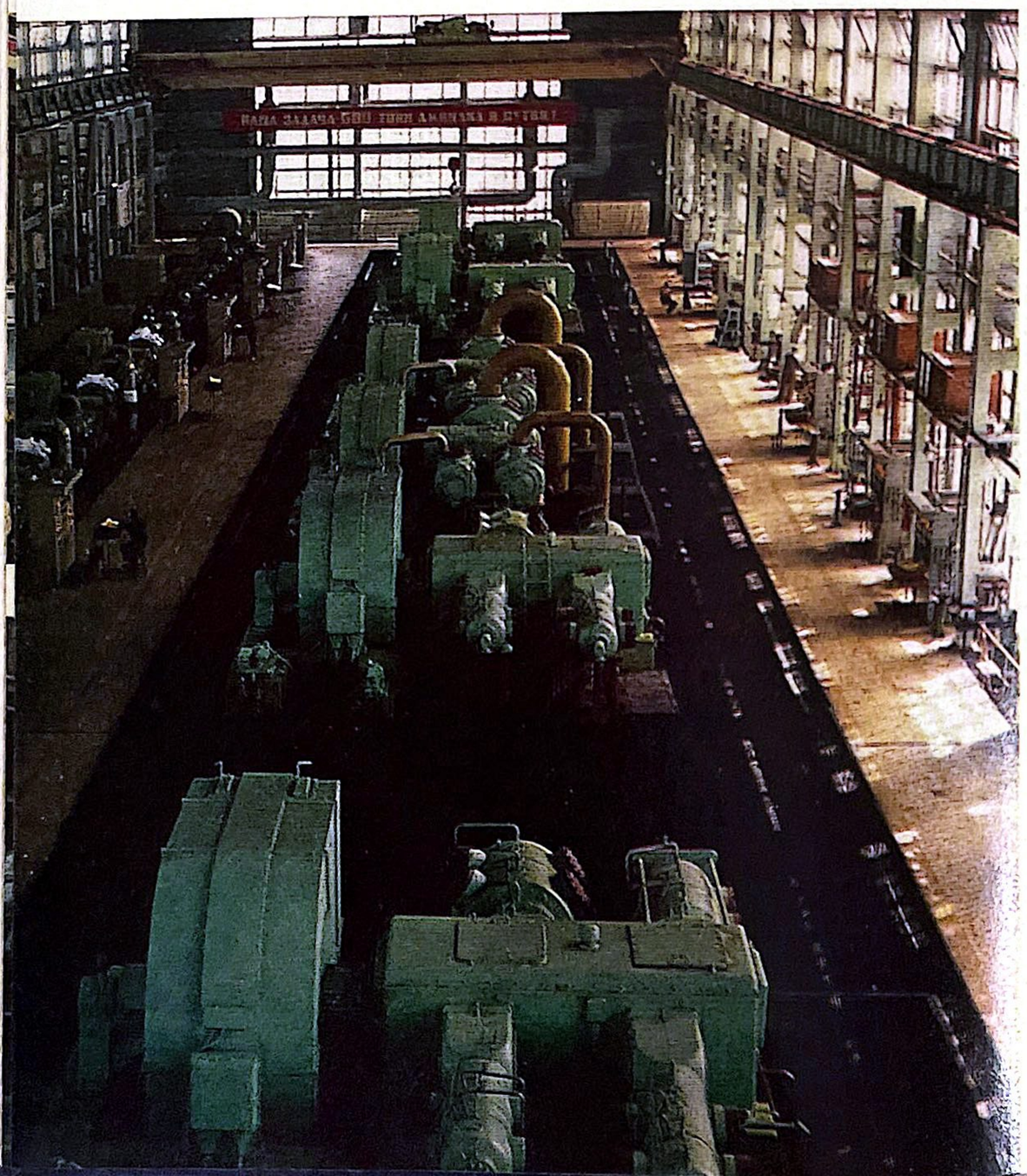
"BELAZ" dump-trucks
assembly line

"Gomselmach" harvesters

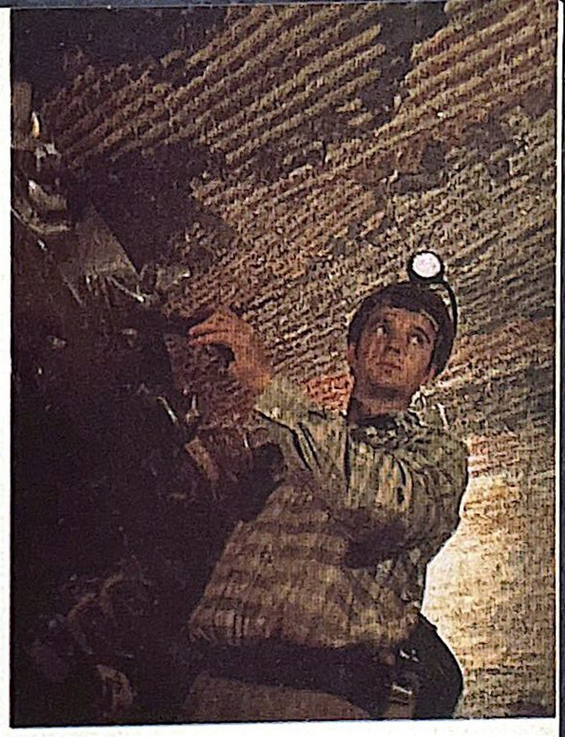
"Minsk" refrigerators —
products of the "Atlant"
amalgamation



Novopolotsk "Polymir" plant

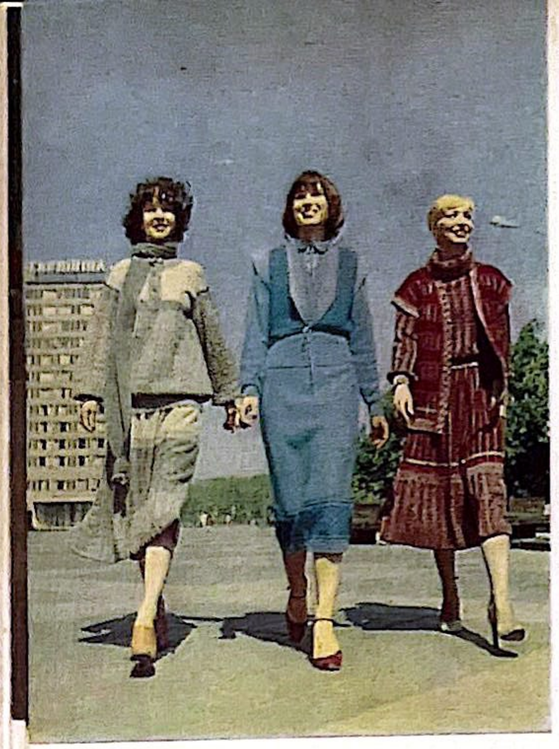


"Azot" — a gigantic factory of fertility



In a "Byeloruskalij" mine

Byelorussian oilmen

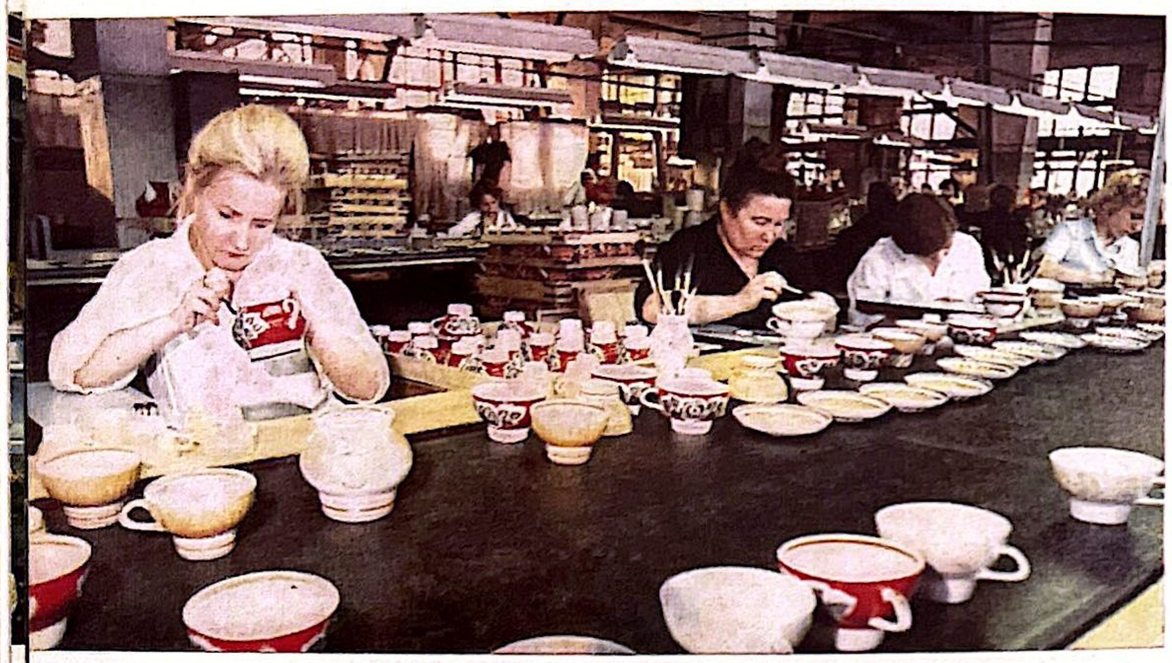


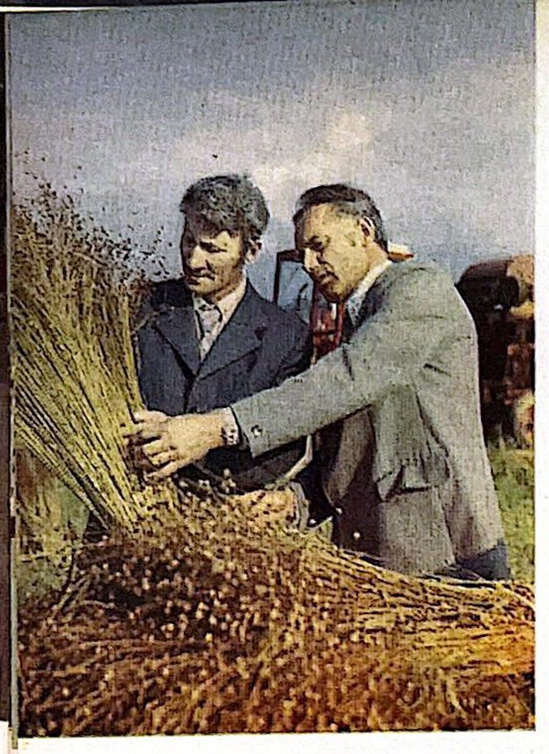
Smart clothes are made
of Byelorussian knitted fabric

Porcelain products
are real works of art

Sweet produce
of the Minsk sponge factory

Potatoes are Byelorussia's
second bread





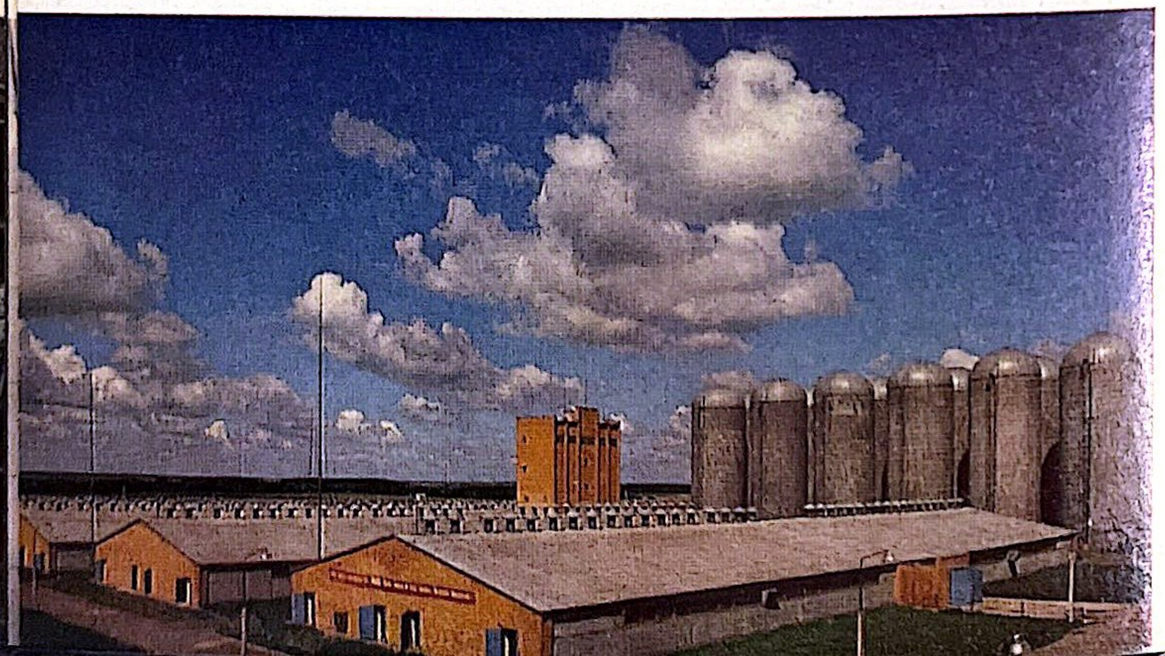
New grade of flax

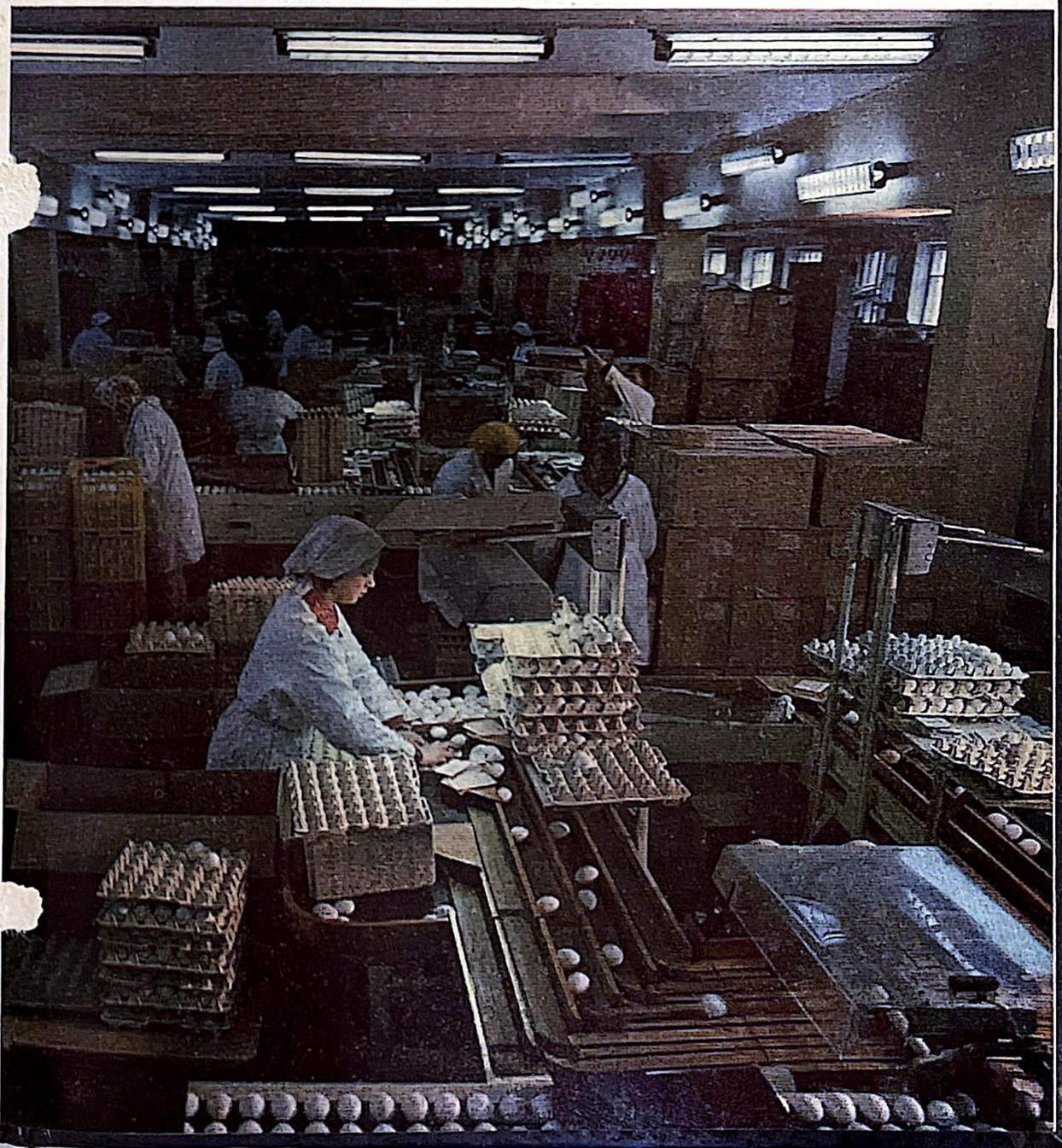
Harvesting

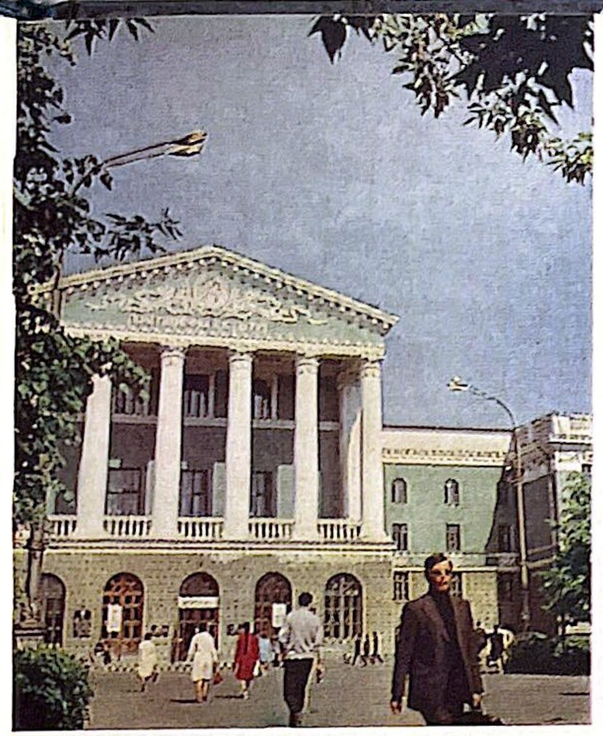
'Mir' state farm,
Baranovichi district

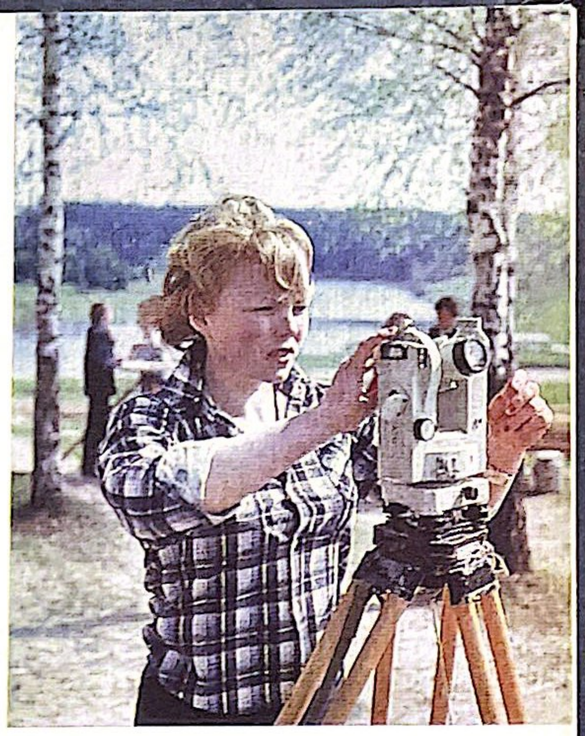
Apples for townspeople

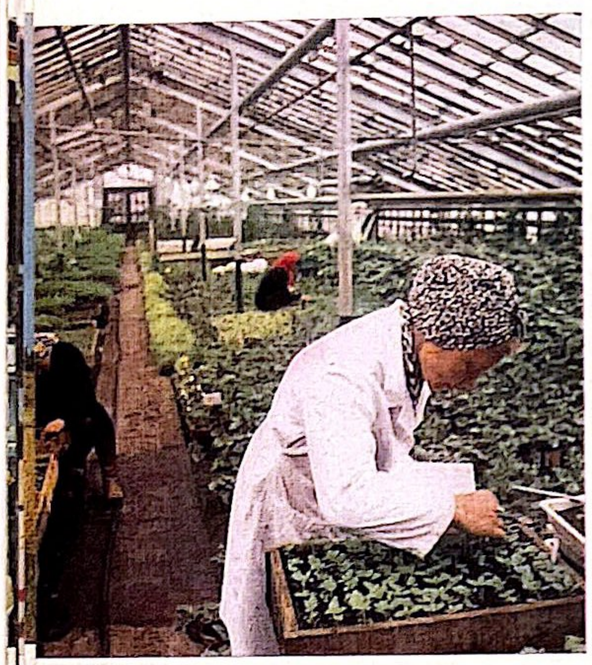
At the poultry yard
named after Krupskaya, Minsk











Sorochi — centre
of the "Chirvonaya Zmena"
collective farm,
Luban district

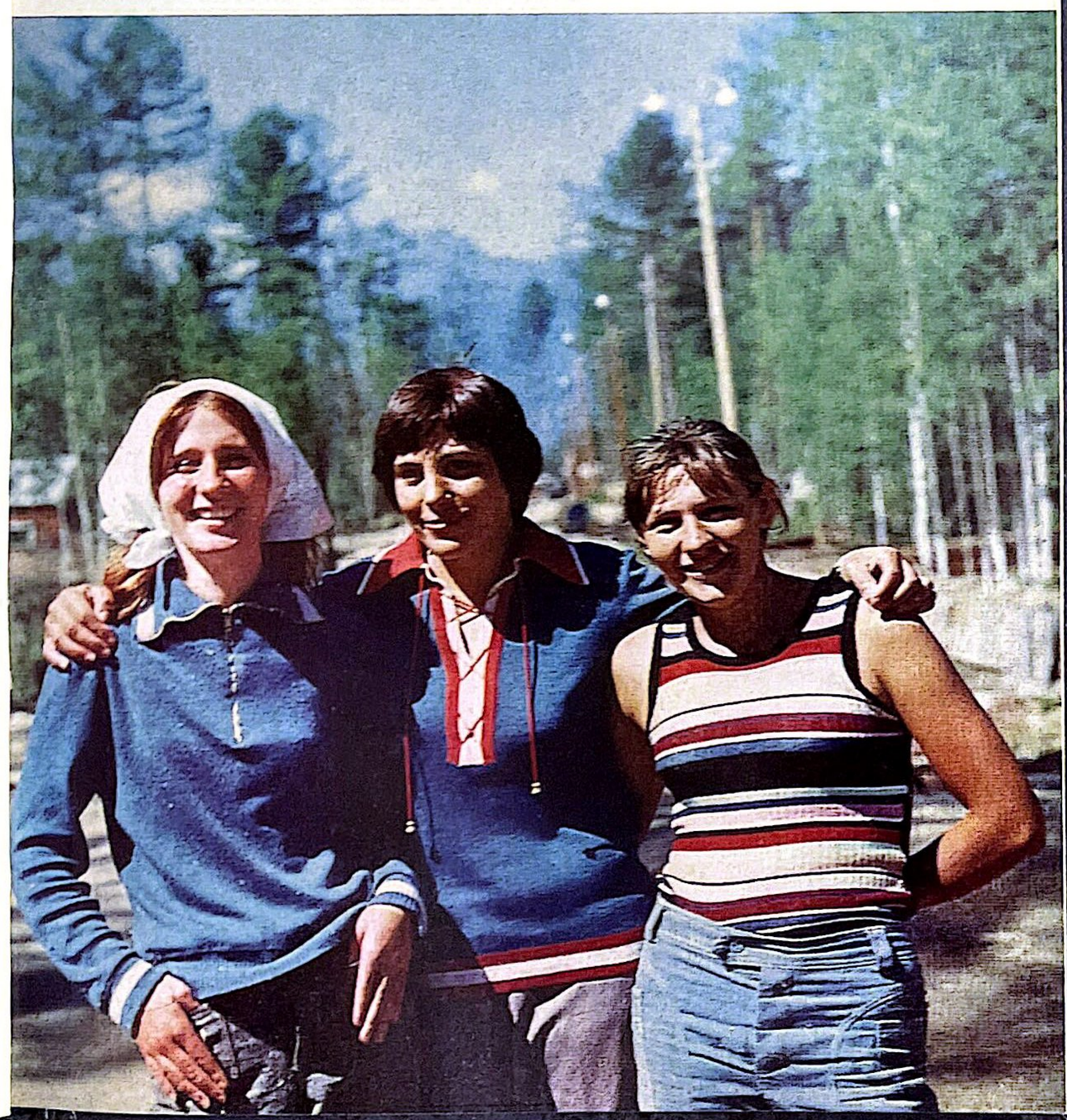
Summer all the year round

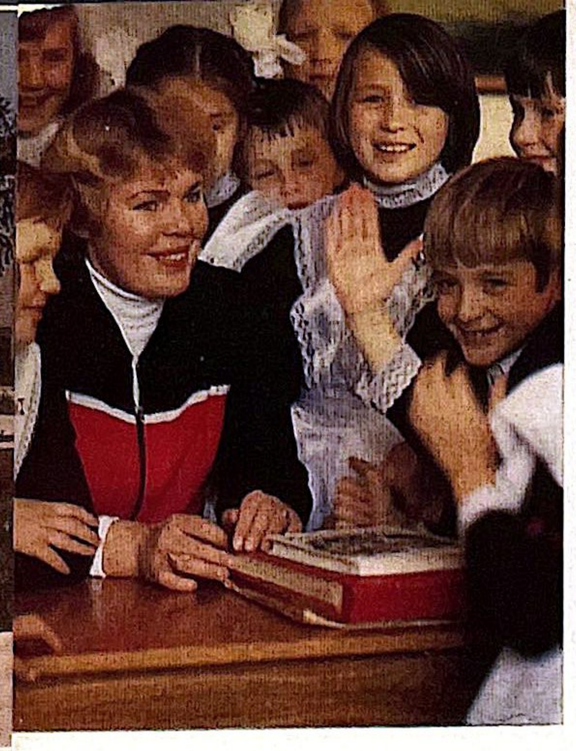
Raisa Ivanovna Asadchaya,
milkmaid of the
"Krasny Oktiabr" farm,
Dobrush district

Byelorussian Polytechnic

Future agronomist's
first practise

Byelorussian Komsomol
representatives at the BAM
(Baikal-Amur Main)





A lesson in mother tongue

Songs of childhood

Young artists studio

Bobruisk art school

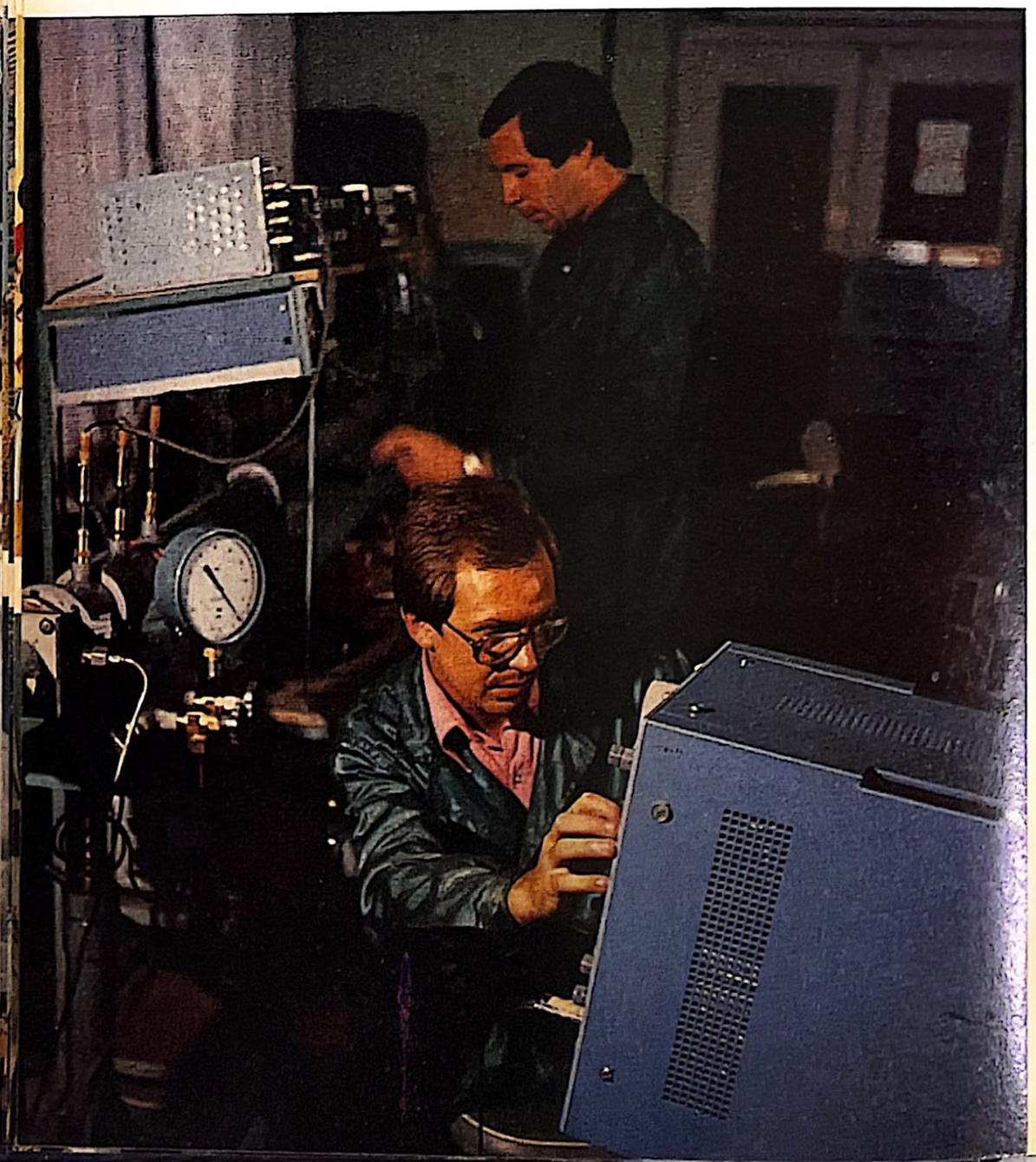
Lingaphone study
of the Minsk Institute
of Foreign Languages

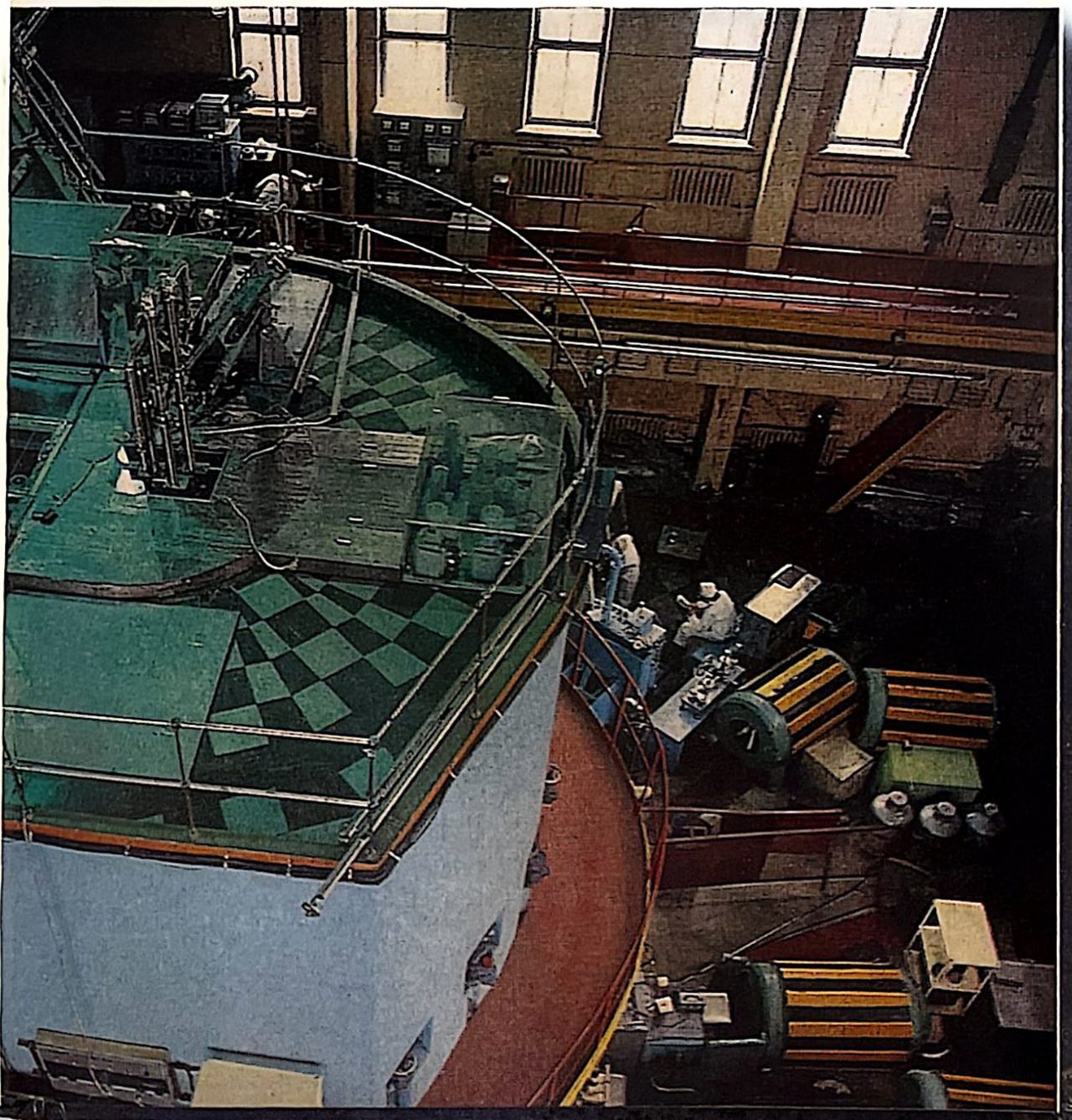
Favourite teacher

In a laboratory of the Institute of Heat and Mass Transfer

Academician V. P. Platonov

Institute of Nuclear Power reactor





"Vjazinka" kitchen —
a good present for housewives

In the family circle

The Great October. In October 1917 a socialist revolution triumphed in Russia and power went to the workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies. On the same day as in Petrograd, which was the 25th of October (November 7, Gregorian calendar) the Soviets seized power in Minsk.

Byelorussian peasants welcomed the 2nd Petrograd All-Russian Congress of Soviets address which contained the Decrees on Peace and on Land and gave power to the working class. The very first steps of the new government were for the benefit of the people. Our country withdrew from World War I, Soviet power put an end to magnate land ownership, gave the land to peasants, fixed an 8-hour working day and introduced worker inspection system into manufacture and distribution of goods, nationalized banks and factories.

Among Soviet Union's first historic acts was the famous Declaration of Russia's peoples' Rights which proclaimed a complete break from the policy of oppression, legislated the Russian nations' rights to national independence. V. I. Lenin and the Government of Russia helped Byelorussians create their own state.

Republic's Genesis. The Kaiser Germany onslaught upon the country of Soviets in February 1918 and occupation of Byelorussia that followed put off the republic's inception day. In the autumn, however, the Red Army troops, backed by guerrillas, began to clear the Byelorussian territory of the German invaders. Minsk was liberated on December 10, 1918. Three weeks later, on the 31st of December the Byelorussian Provisional Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government was created. It was headed by writer Tishka Gartny. On the 1st of January 1919 the gevornment made public its constituent Manifesto which read: "From now on the Byelorussian Soviet Republic shall be a republic of workers, peasants and Red Army soldiers of Byelorussia".

On the 2nd and 3rd of February the 1st Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' depu-

ties was held in Minsk. It legislated the republic's genesis and elected the Central Executive Committee, republic's parliament, constituted the goverment, passed the 1st Constitution of Byelorussia and Declaration on the Establishment of Federal Ties with the Russian Federation.

In spring 1919 hordes of bourgeois Poland supported by the Entente attacked the Byelorussian republic. They captured the bulk of Byelorussia's territory and advanced towards the Berezina. It took the Red Army and partisans a lot of pain to liberate most of the territory by the summer of 1920. According to the March 1921 Riga Peace Treaty about half the Byelorussian ethnographic territory with a population of over 4 000 000 people was to become Polish property.

Brotherly Union. On the 30th of December at the 1st All-Union Congress of Soviets representatives of the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, Transcaucasian Federation and Byelorussia signed a Declaration and an Agreement on the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Formation of the USSR created the most favourable conditions for socio-economic, cultural and national development of the Byelorussian nation, sterngthened its statehood and sovereignty. In 1924 and 1926 responding to the requests of the Byelorussian government and people Russia gave its neighbour 73 000 sq km of territory with a population of 3 400 000 people. Consequently Byelorussia's population rose up to 5 000 000 people, 80 % of whom were Byelorussians.

Towards Socialism. After the Great October Revolution in the brotherly family of Soviet peoples Byelorussians did their best to overcome backwardness and took up construction of a new society. For their basic program they chose the Leninist plan of socialist construction — industrialization, collectivization of small peasant farms, cultural revolution and solution of the national problem. People spared no effort when building new plants, power stations, railroads, etc. Receiving a generous assistance from the brotherly republics and the Union government Byelorussia built big wood-pro-

cessing and textile combines, started metal-working, machine building and power-engineering.

Life in the countryside was changing too. Along with state-run estates set up after the revolution big, mechanized, highly-efficient collective farms were organized. Poverty, misery and unemployment were done away with in the republic's towns and villages. People became better off. Right after the revolution the government started a campaign against adolescent and adult illiteracy. While there were no higher educational establishments in pre-revolutionary Byelorussia already in 1921 a university was opened and in 1940—1941 25 institutes enrolling 21.5 thousand students functioned in Byelorussia. In 1929 the Byelorussian Academy of Sciences was founded. National theatres started working. The art of Byelorussian writers, artists, musicians and singers flourished. A great number of intellectual workers appeared within a short period.

In 1935 for the achievements in the national economy and culture Byelorussia was conferred upon an Order of Lenin, the country's highest award. The republic had become a highly-developed industrial and agricultural country. By the end of the thirties only two friendly classes, workers and peasants, had remained in the society. This meant that the first stage of communist construction called socialism had been succesfully completed.

The joy of this victory was redoubled by the joy of reunification with Western Byelorussia and annexation of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to the fraternal Soviet family.

The Great Patriotic War. But soon there came the terrible summer of 1941. Byelorussia was one of the first Soviet republics to be perfidiously attacked by the Hitlerite Germany. Dozens of fascist divisions advanced towards Byelorussia. Red Army troops fought for every inch of Soviet land.

The Brest fortress garrison's heroic deed became known throughout the country. Cut off from the rest of the army Soviet troops beat back countless attacks of the infuriated enemy. The people lost strength but

would not give in. They stood to death. Battles raged at every fortification of the citadel. Northern isle of the fortress (Kobrin fortifications) was defended by a group of soldiers led by Vladimir Shablowski, a Byelorussian. He was badly wounded and taken prisoner. When he and other prisoners were crossing the bridge over the Bug Shablowski shouted: "Everybody, follow me!", and jumped into the water. This fact, which in the long run became a legend, was on everybody's lips in German prisoner-of-war camps.

Paralysing fascist forces of considerable strength the Brest fortress heroic defenders, who represented 33 nations of our country, withstood about a month's siege. On the walls of the local club (formerly the fortress church) the soldiers scribbled with the help of a sword: "We were three from Moscow — Ivanov, Stepanchikov and Zhuntiaev who held the church and we took an oath not to abandon it. July, 1941". In the western barracks of the citadel an inscription ran: "I'd rather die than surrender. Farewell, Motherland. July 20, 1941".

Sanguine battles were raging near Minsk. Staunch was the resistance of the Red Army soldiers at the fronts on the Berezina, Western Dvina, Dnieper, Sozh, near Borisov, Orscha, Zhlobin, Rogachev, Gomel.

Upon the Party's call both townspeople and countryfolk rose to fight the aggressor. They joined extermination batallions, people's volunteer corps, set up factory, bridge and communication defence detachments. "Everything for the front" was the motto of those days. A volunteer regiment together with regular army troops repulsed the enemy attacks at Gomel for several days. For 25 days the Red Army and volunteers held Mogilev.

On the very first day of the war, in Pinsk, a civil war veteran, Spanish international brigade fighter Vassily Korzh began organizing a guerrilla detachment which he put into action on the sixth day of the war. It took Korzh's squad a year to grow into a major grouping involving seven separate units. In July other

guerrilla detachments joined in the struggle with the enemy all over Byelorussia.

Clandestine resistance and guerrilla groups, young patriot organizations would often spring up on their own, without any outside directives.

213 partisan brigades incorporating 997 detachments and 258 individual units acted on the Hitler occupied Byelorussian land. They were 374 000 strong. 70 000 underground organization activists frustrated the enemy plans in towns and settlements. Russians, Ukrainians, Georgian, Armenians, Kazakhs, Lithuanian, Tatars, Chuvashes, Letts and Ossets, all in all people of 70 nationalities fought the fascists side by side with Byelorussians. Among Byelorussian partisans one could see people from many countries of Europe — Poles, Slovaks, Czechs, Croats, Serbs, Bulgarians, Roumanians, Hungarians, French, Germans, Spaniards, Austrians, Belgians, Italians, Dutchmen, etc.

Partisans and secret organization people were backed up by millions of patriots, in fact, by all Byelorussians. And it is not by chance that during the war years Byelorussia was called the republic of partisans. Be it day or night, summer or winter the invaders would have no peace in Byelorussia. Nation-wide partisan struggle would not cease for a moment. People's avengers raided the enemy logistics, destroyed German war technology, broke communications, frustrated the occupants' political and economic plans, committed acts of sabotage at factories, saved people from being driven to Reich. The partisans had control of about 60 % of Byelorussian territory. "Railway warfare" became extremely popular with partisans. During the war they derailed 11 128 troop trains, destroyed 34 armoured trains, smashed 29 railway stations, 948 headquarters and garrisons, blew up 18 700 vehicles, 819 railway and 4710 other bridges, destroyed over 7 300 kilometres of telephone and telegraph communications, brought down or burned at the airfields 305 aircraft, destroyed 1355 tanks and armoured vehicles, 438 artillery guns and 939 ammunition dumps, captured 85 guns,

278 trench mortars, 1874 machine guns and 20 917 small arms. That was the partisans' contribution to the final victory.

The Motherland did not forget the partisans' war deeds. Hundreds of thousands of them were awarded orders and medals. 87 people were conferred upon the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Among them are women-patriots Yelena Mazanik, Nadezhda Troyan, Maria Osipova who assassinated Hitler's henchman, General Commissar of Byelorussia Wilhelm Kube.

The Red Army began to clear Byelorussia of the invaders in autumn 1943 when our troops advanced south-east and liberated Gomel and some adjoining areas. At dawn on June 23, 1944 a battle for complete liberation of Byelorussia broke out. "Bagration" operation was put into effect by the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Byelorussian and 1st Baltic Fronts. They were supported by partisan units. Defeating the enemy they freed Vitebsk (June 26), Orscha (June 27), Mogilev (June 28), Minsk (July 3). By the end of July the whole of the republic had been cleared of the occupants.

1 500 000 Byelorussians fought at the Great Patriotic war fronts, 217 generals and admirals among them. Our compatriots beat the fascists in the Ukraine, near Leningrad and Moscow, in the Caucasus and Stalingrad, in the Crimea and at the Kursk Bulge, on the Vistula and in Berlin. More than ten of them followed Alexander Matrosov's example throwing themselves on the gun-ports of fascist pill-boxes. Fighter-pilot B. Kovzan made 360 military missions and is the world's only ace who rammed four enemy aircraft. 380 Byelorussian soldiers were favoured the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Four people — P. F. Golovachev, I. I. Gusakovski, S. F. Shutov and I. I. Yakubovski — are Twice Heroes of the Soviet Union.

Byelorussia's daughters and sons fought courageously in the Resistance and partisan detachments of Poland, Czechoslovakia, France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Yugoslavia and other European countries, worked selflessly on the Soviet non-occupied territory where

over a hundred Byelorussian factories had been evacuated and manufactured all the neccessary goods for the front.

Byelorussia's contribution to the cause of triumph over the fascism has been appreciated throughout the world. With this in view the spring 1945 San Francisco Conference of the United Nations (the war was then coming to an end) requested the Byelorussian SSR to be a constitutor-member of a new international organization — the UNO.

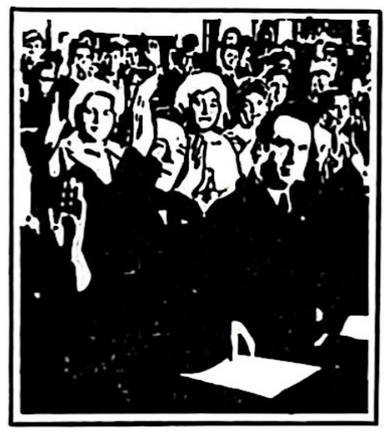
The working people of Byelorussia will never forget the war trials, its victims and heroic pages. The memory of the fallen heroes is sacredly cherished. Their names are given to streets, enterprises, collective farms, schools, pioneer brigades. Mounds of immortality are erected in their honour. A sublime Mound of Glory has risen near Minsk. The Brest Hero-Fortress has been turned into a museum and a memorial complex.

The war has left deep wounds on Byelorussian soil. Every fourth citizen of the republic was killed. The Hitler barbarians destroyed and burned down 209 Byelorussian towns and settlements, 9200 villages. 619 villages suffered the tragedy of Khatyn, burnt down together with the inhabitants. About 3 000 000 people were rendered homeless. The fascist aggressors wiped out 10 338 industrial enterprises, 8825 schools, 2187 hospitals and out-patient points, clubs, theatres, colleges, plundered all the collective and state farms, machine and tractor stations. The Hitlerities took out to Reich or destroyed the bulk of industrial equipment, agricultural machinery, art values and a lot of other valuables, felled down hundreds of thousands of hectares of forests and orchards. Byelorussia lost over 50 % of its national revenue. The total material damage inflicted on the republic by the fascists made up 25 its annual budgets.

Thanks to the Soviet state's help, to the friendship and solidarity of all our nations Byelorussia was able to rehabilitate the economy. It took the republic just a few years to heal the war wounds. Already by 1950 its

industrial output had surpassed the prewar level. Rehabilitation of the economy was technologically updated. New industries were born. Towns and villages were revived and grew still more beautiful.

For the achievements in various fields of national economy Byelorussia was awarded a second Order of Lenin (1958), an Order of October Revolution (1968) and an Order of Friendship of Peoples (1972).



SOCIAL AND STATE SYSTEM

By the beginning of the 60ies socialism had gained a complete victory in the USSR. The subsequent entrance of the republic into a period of developed socialism was reflected in the Constitution of the BSSR adopted in 1978 on the basis of the Constitution of the USSR of 1977.

Political system. The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is a socialist state of the whole people which expresses the will and interests of workers, peasants and intelligentsia, the working people of all the nationalities of the republic. All power in it belongs to the people who exercise it through the Soviets of People's Deputies. The Soviets constitute a political foundation of the republic. All other state bodies are under the control of and accounted to the Soviets. All organizations of the Party function on the basis of the Constitution — the Fundamental Law of the USSR.

Economic system. The foundation of the economic system of the BSSR is socialist ownerschip of the means of production. It has two forms: state property (belonging to all the people) and collective-and-cooperative property. Socialist ownership also embraces the property of trade unions and other public organizations which they require to carry out their activities under their rules. The land, its minerals, waters, and forests are the exclusive property of the state. The state owns the basic means of production in industry, construction and agriculture, means of transport and communications; the banks, trade organisations and public utilities, most urban housing and other property.

The property of collective farms and other cooperative organizations (consumers, housing cooperatives, etc) comprises their enterprises, the means of production, their produce and other assets they require. The land held by collective farms is secured to them for their free use in perpetuity.

Two forms of socialist ownership of means of production underlie the division of Soviet society into two classes: workers and kolkhoz peasantry. As agrarian and industrial amalgamations serving several farms are set up joint state and collective farm property is more and more coming into its own. Together with all the other measures it leads to the bringing together of the existing forms of socialist property and merging them into integrated communist property belonging to all the people.

Along with public property there exists personal property of citizens. The personal property may include articles of everyday use, personal consumption and convenience, the implements and other objects of a small-holding, a house and earned savings. Citizens may be granted the use of plots of land for building an individual dwelling, for fruit and vegetable growing, for keeping livestock and poultry.

The state and collective farms provide assistance to citizens in working their small-holdings which contribute to more complete satisfaction of the needs of the population and augmenting the marketability of the public propery of hte collective and state farms.

The personal property of citizens and the right to inherit it are protected by the state. However, the state sees to it that property owned or used by citizens shall not serve as a means of deriving unearned income and be employed to the detriment of the interests of society.

In the BSSR the law permits individual labour in handicrafts, farming the provision of services for the public and other forms of activity based exclusively on the personal work of individual citizens and members of their families in the interests of society. However, within the past thirty years or so there have been no

individual peasants in the republic: all of them have joined the collective ferms. The craftsmen's share in the gross output of Byelorussia is less than one hundredth of percent.

Like elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the principle of socialism is adhered to in Byelorussia: From each according to his ability, to each according to his work. In accordance with it the state exercises control over the measure of labour and consumption. Socially useful work and its results determine a person's status in society.

Workers, peasants and intelligentsia live and toil in close friendship and alliance with each other. This unbreakable alliance forms the social basis of the republic. Together with other 14 equal republics Byelorussia forms part of the uniform federal state — the USSR.

Forming part of the USSR, Byelorussia remains a sovereign state and retains the right freely to secede from the USSR. Its territory may not be altered without its consent. The BSSR has the right to enter into relations with other states, conclude treaties with them, exchange diplomatic and consular representatives. At present the cosulates-general of Poland and GDR are accredited in Minsk, capital of the BSSR.

The jurisdiction of the BSSR as represented by its highest bodies of state authority and administration covers the adoption of the Constitution, legislation of the republic, endorsement of state plans for the economic and social development and the state Budget, direction of the national economy, direction of public education, cultural construction, health services, social security, amnesty and pardon of citizens convicted by courts of the BSSR, deciding matters relating to the republic's administrative and territorial structure, etc.

The Supreme Soviet. The highest body of state authority of the republic is a one-chamber parliament — Supreme Soviet of the BSSR. It has 485 Deputies elected for a term of five years by constituences with populations of equal size — approximately 20 thousand people. Sessions of the republic's parlia-

ment are convened twice a year.— Its exclusive prerogative is promulgating laws.

A collective president. Byelorussia has no individual head of state. The republic'c parliament elects a collective president — the Presidium of the the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR as consisting of a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen, a Secretary and 15 members. According to tradition, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR is one of the 15 Vice-Chairmen of the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR interprets the laws of the BSSR, promulgates decrees between sessions of the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR, relieves individual ministers of their responsibilities, awards the Diploma of Honour and the Diploma of the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR, issues acts of amnesty and exercises the right of pardon of convicted citizens, grants citizenship of the republic, etc. In all its activities it is accountable to the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR.

A good deal of work is carried on by the standing commissions of the Byelorussian parliament. At present they are 17 in number and over three hundred deputies are their members.

Government. At the first session of every new convocation the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR forms a new government of the republic — the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR. Today it consists of 56 members — the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, ministers, Chairmen of state committees and heads of other bodies. The Ministries, Committees and other bodies headed by the government members are either Union and republican or only republican bodies. The Council of Ministers of the BSSR is the highest executive and administrative body of the republic. It is responsible and accountable to the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR and between its sessions — to its Presidium.

Local Soviets. Local Soviets of People's Deputies are bodies of state authority in regions, districts, cities, settlements and rural communities. They direct state, economic, social and cultural development within their

territory, endorse the local budget, exercise guidance over state bodies, ensure observance of the law, protection of state and public order and of citizen's rights. They settle any questions placed within their competence by the laws of the USSR and BSSR. Elected for the term of 2.5 years, the local Soviets convene their sessions at least 4 times a year. To direct the economy as well as cultural and educational activities the local Soviets elect executive committees and form their sectoral departments and administration bodies.

The local Soviets have huge material resources and sums of money at their disposal. Suffice it to say that if in 1981 the BSSR's state budget was equal to 5.9 billion roubles the local budgets amounted to 1.8 billion.

Courts and Procurator's Supervision. Along with the Soviets the interests of society and individual citizens are protected by such state organs of the BSSR as the courts and procurators. Justice in the republic is administered by the Supreme Court of the BSSR, Regional Courts and District (City) People's Courts and also by special courts set up by decision of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. In all courts cases are heard (with separate exceptions provided by law) with the participation of people's assessors and open to the public with observance of all the rules of legal assistance. Judges and assessors are independent and subject only to the law.

Supreme power of supervision over the strict and uniform observance of laws of the USSR and BSSR, by all ministries, state committees and departments, officials and citizens on the territory of the republic is vested in the Procurator-General of the USSR and lower-ranking procurators subordinated to him. To provide uniformity in observing laws the agencies of the Procurator's Office exercise their power independently of any local bodies whatsoever, and are subordinate solely to the Procurator-General of the USSR.

Big Rights. The activities of the state organs, social and state organizations of the republic and the Union provide favourable conditions for the life and development of every citizen of Byelorussia. All citizens of the BSSR enjoy equal rights in all spheres of economic, so-

cial, political and cultural life irrespective of their origin, social standing, nationality, sex, education, language, attitude to religion, place of residence. They enjoy in full the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. These are the rights to work, rest and leisure, health protection, maintenance in old age and in sickness, housing, education, right to enjoying cultural benefits, right to take part in the management and administration of state and public affairs and to submit proposals and criticize shortcomings, etc. These rights are not only proclaimed but ensured in practice. They are ensured by steady growth of economy, absence of crises and unemployment, establishment of a 41-hour working week and a shorter week under harder conditions of work, providing paid leaves, social insurance and free medical service, setting up a wide network of holiday homes and sanatoria, cultural institutions, educational institutions, housing construction, etc.

Citizens of the BSSR are guaranteed inviolability of the person. No one may be arrested except by a court decision or on warrant of a procurator. Inviolability of the home, the privacy of citizens and of their correspondence, telephone conversations are protected by law. Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience, that is, the right to profess and not to profess any religion and to conduct religious worship or atheistic propaganda. In the BSSR the church is separated from the state and the school from the church. The family enjoys the protection of the state.

In order to strengthen and develop the socialist system and in accordance with the interests of the people they are guaranteed and provided by material conditions freedom of speech, of the press and of assembly, meetings, street processions and demonstrations. To promote their political activity and with the aim of building communism, citizens of the republic associate in various public organizations. The most active and conscientious citizens among workers, peasants and

intelligentsia belong to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. One of the detachments of the CPSU is the Communist Party of Byelorussia whose organizations number over six hundred thousand members and candidate-members of the CPSU.

Guaranteeing big rights and freedoms to its citizents, the socialist state at the same time demands that they observe Soviet laws and labour discipline, show an honest attitude to one's social duties and respect for social community, protect public property, be ready to defend the Socialist Motherland. From the very first day of their inception the Soviets have been organs of the working people themselves. Deputies of the local and Supreme Soviets are representatives of the people: workers, peasants and intellectuals, men amd women, communists and non-party people, people belonging to different generations.

Out of 485 deputies elected to the BSSR's Sepreme Soviet on February 24th, 1980 there are 148 workers and 97 collective farmers, 328 communists and 57 non-party people, 180 women, 89 deputies who are not yet 30 years of age. Out of 85394 deputies to local Soviets elected on June 20th, 1982 workers account for 41.1 per cent and collective farmers for 27.8 per cent, non-party people for 57.1 per cent, women for 49.6 per cent, deputies under 30—33.7 per cent.

All of them are the best people from the midst of the people: metal workers and locomotive drivers, women weavers and tractor drivers, bricklayers and milkmaids, teachers and flax-growers, turners and sewing-machine operators, pig-tenders and physicians, miners and fitters, scientists and military men, party officials and officials of the Soviets. And they are sent to the organs of power by the entire people. 99.99 per cent of the electors registered in Byelorussia participated in the elections to local Soviets that took place in June, 1982 and 99.96 per cent of those who took part in the elections voted for the candidates of the block of communists and non-party people.

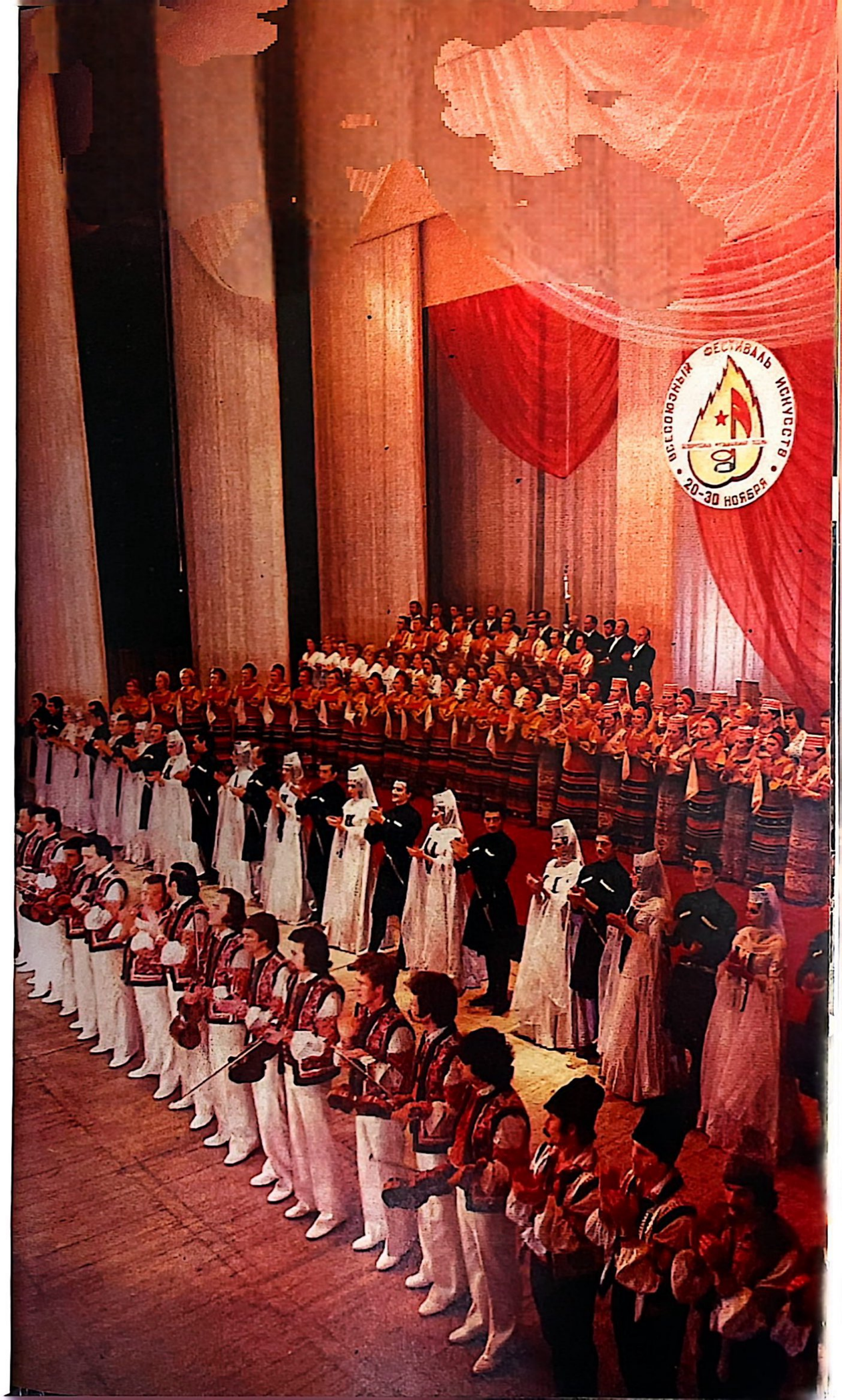
Elections in the BSSR are universal: all citizens of the republic who have reached the age of 18 have

the right to vote and be elected. Elections are equal: each citizen has only one vote, all voters exercise the franchise on an equal footing. Elections are direct and voting at elections is secret. Branches and organizations of the Communist Party, trade unions, cooperatives, the Young Communist League organizations, cultural societies, work collectives and meetings of servicemen in their military units have the right to nominate candidates.

With a view to further development of democracy, drawing ever broader masses into direct management of state affairs, the body of deputies is subject to constant renewal. Out of 485 present-day deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR 362 people or 74.8 per cent were not parliamentarians of the previous convocation and out of 85 394 deputies to the local Soviets the corresponding figure is 49.8 per cent. The Soviets of the republic constantly draw upwards of a million voluntary activists into their work. In fact, the entire population, i.e. the whole of the people are closely connected with the Soviets through the deputies and a body of activists.

Thus direct democracy is advanced in the republic owing to an inseparable unity with the representative democracy, i.e. elected organs of power. Its essence lies in the fact that the broadest masses of working people are drawn into the management of state, production and public affairs not only by means of their participation in the state organs — the Soviets, but through public organizations, their organs in the centre and in the provinces, in working collectives and at one's place of residence. Byelorussia has a ramified network of organizations and societies of working people — professional, creative, youth, scientific, sporting, amateur and those connected with everyday necessities of life, etc.

Trade Unions. Trade Unions are one of the most numerous mass organizations: the membership of the 24 trade unions formed in Byelorussia amounts to over 5 mln workers, employees, collective farmers and students. The trade unions take an active part in running



Ivan Shamyakin,
People's Writer of the republic,
Hero of Socialist Labour

Festival in honour
of the national bard Yanka Kupala

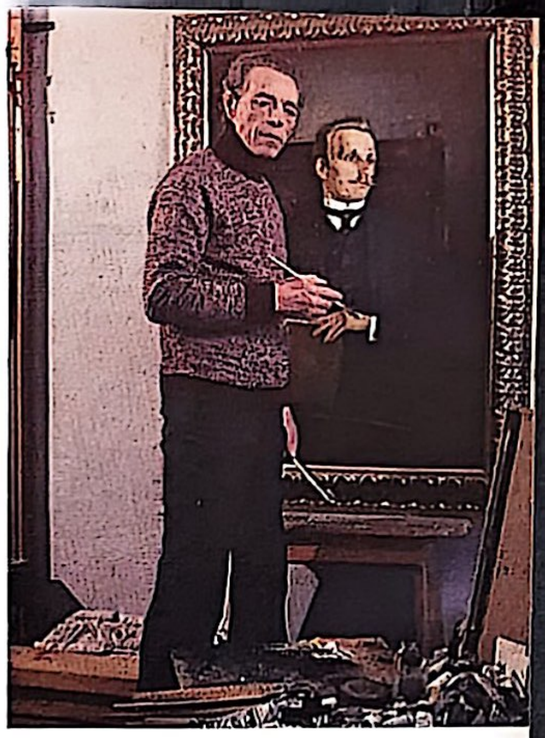
M. Glinka competition
of vocalists
A word about Yakub Kolas

Ukrainians congratulating Byelorussians

"Khoroshki" company

People's Artist of the USSR Michael Savitsky at work

"Paulinka" — a pearl of the Byelorussian theatre

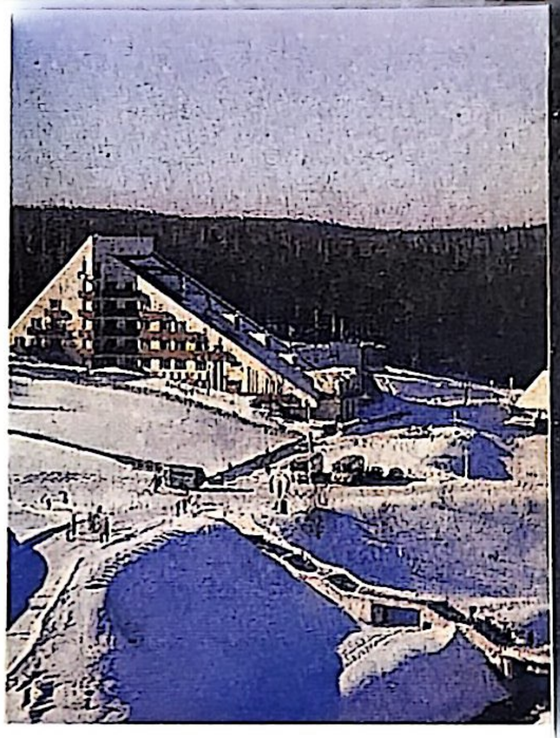


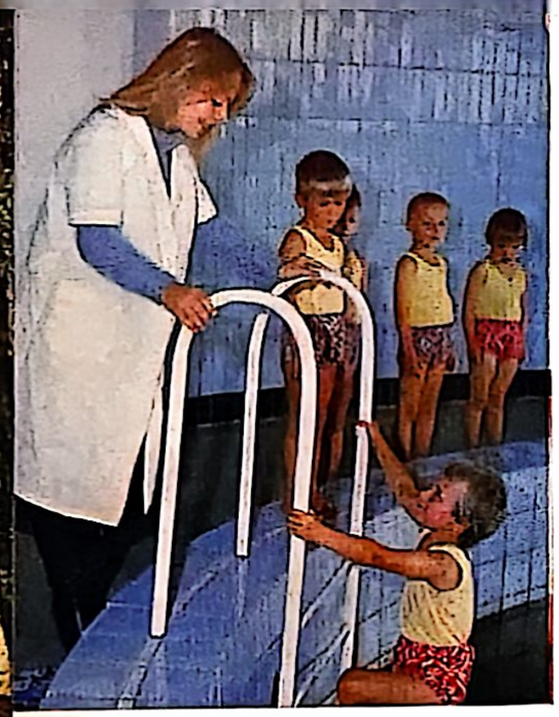
A meeting of Russians and Byelorussians on the border of the republics

Friendly relations between the young people of the USSR and France grow stronger

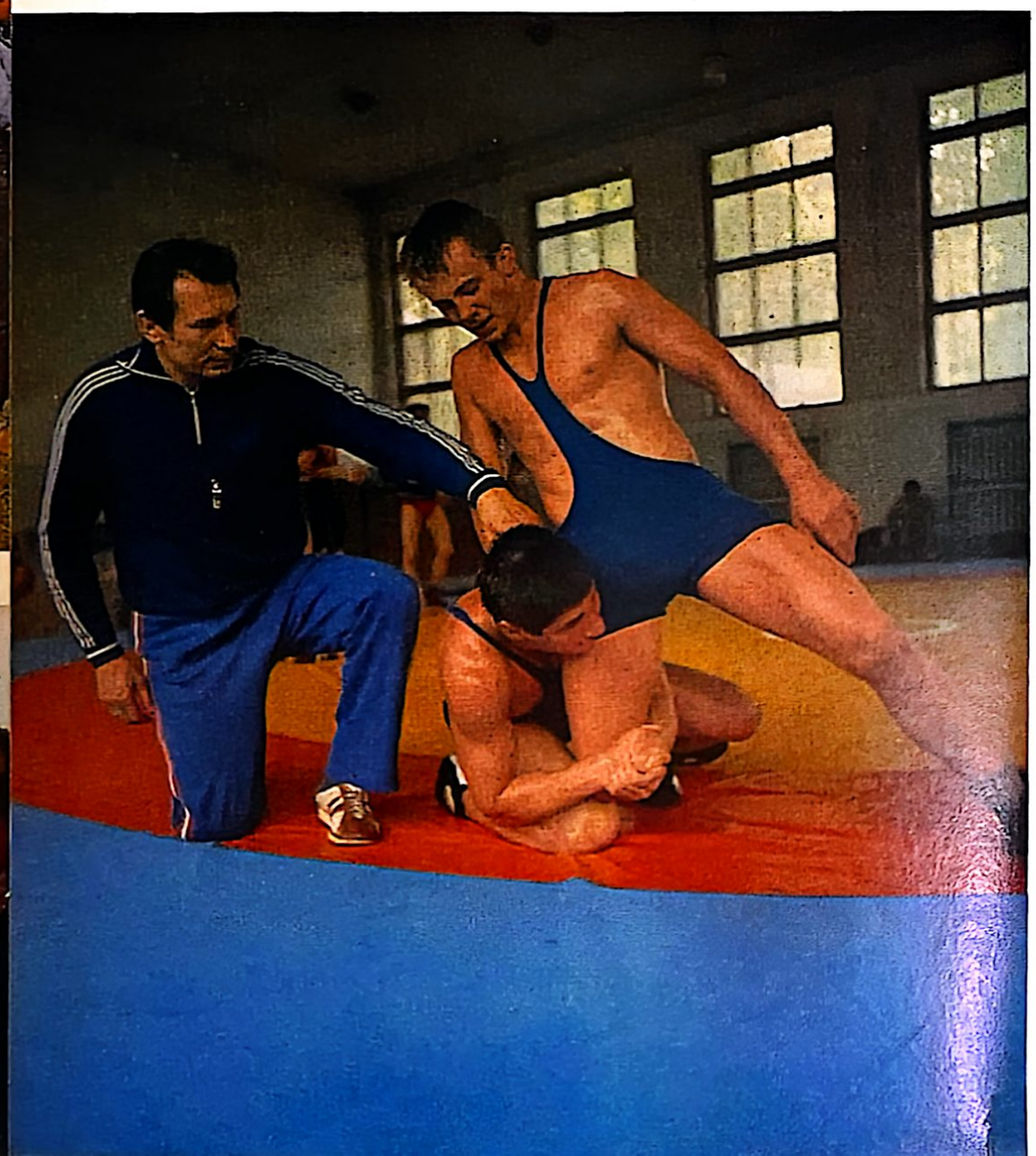
"Raubichi" sports complex

Minsk — the town of the Olympic football





In the swimming-pool of the "Kolosok" kindergarten on the "Chervonaja Zmena" collective farm



A wrestling workout conducted by A. Medved, Honoured Master of Sports

the state and economic construction,— in electing organs of power, promulgating laws concerning matters of productions, labour, every-day life, culture and supervise over the observance of these laws. They participate in planning and controlling wages, watch and direct norm-setting and labour record-keeping, check labour protection and safety measures. Under their guidance operate the standing production meetings set up at all the republic's enterprises. The trade unions have a decisive say in the matters of distributing housing.

The trade unions perform a number of functions incumbent on the state organs. They are in charge of state social insurance of working people (in the 1981 BSSR's budget it accounted for half a billion roubles), take care of the medical services of the toilers, participate in granting pensions and subsidies to workers and employees and members of their families. Placed at their disposal are 7 sanatoria, 8 holiday homes, 2 holiday hotels, 81 sanatoria-preventoriums where the inmates can rest and are cared for without stopping their work. The trade unions also run 3 Young Pioneer camps of the satatorium type where 253 thousand children annually rest and undergo treatment. Another important duty of the trade unions is activity aimed at spreading culture among the masses and also political and educational work among factory and office workers and their families, as well as taking care of their recreation. The BSSR's trade unions run 719 clubs, Houses and Palaces of culture, 15.2 thousand information rooms and Lenin rooms, 940 cinema units, 23 thousand amateur talent groups. They also run sports societies, 26 excursion and travel bureaus, 15 tourist centres and hotels.

Young Communist League. The advanced youth of the republic are all members of the All-Union Lenin Young Communist League, organization political in character, whose activities are directed by the Communist Party. The main task of the Komsomol is to foster young men and women in the glorious traditions of the Party and the people, in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, inculcate into them love of labour and high moral qua-

lities. There are 1.4 mln Komsomol members in Byelorussia. The Young Communist League directs the work of the Young Pioneer organization which is 630 thousand strong.

Rural Cooperatives. Two kinds of cooperatives are active in the rural communities of the republic — those of production and consumer types. The former include the collective farms, they are set up to promote better organization of agricultural production; the latter embrace cooperative societies in the countryside. They are 290 in number over Byelorussia and their membership is 2.8 mln. United into a single association — Belkoopsoyuz, they run rural trade. They are in charge of a wide network of shops, canteens, cafes, restaurants, storage places, factories involved in processing agricultural and forest raw materials.

Housing cooperative. Public organizations whose aim is to promote the solution of the housing problem in town are housing cooperatives. Supported by the state, they run housing construction and organize maintenance of flats. As regards the character of activities, they are akin to gardening clubs.

Scientific societies. Scientific and public organizations, which unite on a volutary basis reserchers and other specialists in sciences and arts, are engaged in promoting the development of natural sciences and the humanities and carry on propaganda of their achievements. The republic has a number of affiliations of the USSR's philosophic society, Soviet sociological association, Psychologists' Society of the USSR, All-Union paleontologic society, BSSR's pedagogic and geographic societies, 8 biologic societies (including physiologic, botanical, microbioligic and others) and 33 medcal societies — those of surgeons, paediatrists, therapeutists, urinologists, oncologists, etc. The membership of the scientific societies is 108 thousand.

20 scientfiic and technical societies with a membership of 490 thousand workers, collective farmers, specialists and scientists are founded in various branches of industry, in agriculture, transport, communications and

trade. Upwards of 390 thousand working people have joined the society of innovators and inventors.

Knowledge and the people. The "Knowledge" society in the Byelorussian SSR does a great amount of work aimed at disseminating scientific and political knowledge among broad masses of people. Among its members are scientists, teachers, engineers, economists, specialists in agriculture, medical workers, artists, advanced workers — 120 thousand people all told. The society runs 6 thousand primary organizations on collective farms, at factories and enterprises and educational institutions.

Creative unions. There are six creative unions in Byelorussia: those of writers, composers, architects, artists, journalists, cinema-workers and the Byelorussian theatrical association. Their aggregate membership is over five thousand.

Sports and defence societies. Upwards of 3 mln people continually go in for sports in the following nine sports societies: "Dynamo", "Spartak", "Lokomotive", "Vodnik", "Trudoviye Reservy", "Burevestnik", "Urozhai", "Krasnoye Znamya" and "Zenith". The secondary school physical culture groups embrace 1280 thousand pupils.

Patriotic education of the working people and promotion of military-oriented and technical kinds of sports are the purposes of organizations of the volunteer Army, Aviation and Navy Society. A good deal of work is carried on by the Red Cross Society of the BSSR (with a membership of 4.6 mln), Hunters and Fishermen's society, Life-saving on the Water and Volunteer Fire-protection societies. Cultural and educational activities are also carried on by some other societies, such as Nature-protection society (3.3. mln membership), Historical and Cultural Monument-protection society (1.9 mln membership), Book-lovers' and Philatelist societies. The noble activities of "Radzima (Motherland)", a society of cultural ties with foregn countrymen and the Society of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries are known in many corners of the world. The development of social and poli-

tical activities of the working people, strengthening labour discipline and public order are promoted by the work of comrades' courts and volunteer public order squads which are formed by the working people themselves.

Voluntary Public Inspection. Voluntary public inspection which is both a state organ and a mass public organization of the working people serves as one of the forms of the citizens' participation in running the state. The guiding organs — voluntary public inspection committees are formed by the Soviets of People's deputies. Members of the groups and posts of voluntary public inspection to be set up at the enterprises and at the places of residence are elected at general meetings of the working people. There are 400 thousand voluntary public inspectors in the republic. They check how the government's decisions are carried out at their particular working sectors.

The volunteer association of lawyers is also among the public organizations of the BSSR.

Active in the republic are various volunteer public organizations located at the places of one's residence: 4971 street and house-managing committees, 1326 rural community committees, 11 921 parents' committees at secondary schools, 2954 women's councils and other mass organizations with an aggregate membership of a million and a half.

All these organizations at the place of one's work or residence are, according to V. I. Lenin, "the remarkable means" which makes it possible "...immediately, with one blow, to increase our state machinery tenfold, a means which not a single bourgeois state has ever wielded, or can wield."

ECONOMY

Byelorussia is part of the integrated national economic organism of the USSR, one of the most important and highly-developed economic regions of the country. Its economy is made up of heavy industry, versatile light industries, modern transport, intensive agriculture, full-scale consumer service, and sound system of finance and credit. The republic's industrial machinery embraces 1197 amalgamations, integrated plants, factories and works, electric power stations, mines, oil-extracting enterprises, quarries, 2677 collective and state farms, hundreds of transport, communications and construction enterprises.

Industry. In the past Byelorussia was a backward agrarian country. Before the revolution, in 1913, 86 per cent of its population lived and toiled in the countryside. 75 per cent of the aggregate social product produced in this region was accounted for by agriculture. Today the foundation of Byelorussia's economy is formed by industry. It constitutes over 60 per cent of gross product and 30 per cent of the republic's main production funds. In 1982 the industrial production exceeded the 1913 level 257-fold! During the Soviet period the character of Byelorussian industry has fundamentally changed. Prior to the revolution it was dominated by small-scale cottage craft engaged in primary processing of agricultural and timber raw materials. Today the industrial make-up of the BSSR is determined by giants of machine-building, radio and electronics, big chemistry and electric engineering.

Every six minutes a tractor goes off the conveyor belts of the Byelorussian factories, every two minutes — a motorcycle, every 13 minutes — a truck, every 18 minutes — a metal-cutting machine tool, every minute — 70 items of outer knitwear garments, 80 pair of leather footwear, in less than a minute — a refrigerator, a TV-set, a radio, etc. Byelorussia contributes 12 per cent of the total number of metal-cutting machine tools produced in the USSR, 14 per cent of all tractors, 5 per cent of all lorries, 10 per cent of all refrigerators, 8 per cent of all TV-sets, 20 per cent of all motor-cycles, 8 per cent of all knitted goods, II per cent of all linens, 23 per cent of chemical fibre, 19 per cent of all mineral fertilizers, more than half of them being potash type.

A republic of machinery. The core of Byelorussian industry and the entire economy is constituted by machine-building. It accounts for about a third of the republic's industtrial output and has a rather developed versatile structure. It includes motor and tractor industry, agricultural machine-building, machine tool and tool production industries, instrument engineering, radioelectronics, electric engineering, making of bearings, press-forging plants, lifting-and-conveying and petroleum chemistry machines, production of trading equipment and machines for light, food and construction industries, ship-building industry, etc.

Lorries produced by the amalgamation "Belavtomaz" are well-known in this country as well as abroad. Its headquarters plant — the Minsk motor works — is the firstling the Byelorussian motor industry started shortly after the war. Formerly it produced powerful tip-up lorries with a silvery emblem in the shape of a bison. To-day it produces lorries and road-trains belonging to the new family of Maz—6422 with a weight-carrying capacity of 20 to 35 tons. Hundreds of thousands of "bisons" have left its shops. However, these are not the only achievements to its credit: the headquarters plant participated in the construction of new motor works in Zhodino and Mogilev.

The Byelorussian motor works situated in Zhodino near Minsk produces Belaz dump trucks with load-

lifting capacity of 27, 40, 75 and 100 tons and also a 120-ton road train coal carrier. New prototype 180-ton lorries are being put through tests and the engineering development of a 250-ton giant is to follow. The Mogilev motor works turns out motor trucks suitable for bad roads — those are self-propelled earth-moving machines and tip-up road trains marked for high manoeuvrability in narrow underground drifts.

Minsk tractors "MTZ—Belarus" have won worldwide fame. They have received much recognition in different parts of the Soviet Union and withstood the most severe tests in GDR, USA, Great Britain, India and other countries. They are manufactured in more than a dozen modifications suited to work in diverse climatic zones and natural conditions — in steppe areas and on mountain slopes, in severe north and hot Africa, on potato, maize or cotton fields and vine plantations. The scientific council of the University of Nebraska (USA) has entered the Byelohrussian tractor in the "Red Book" as the best machine of its class. The "MTZ—Belarus" tractors have already won 17 gold and two silver medals abroad. At present 80-horse power MTZ—80 tractors go off the factory conveyor and in the near future mass production of a 100 horse power MTZ—100 and 150 horse power MTZ—142 models and a one and a half hp kitchen-garden tractor is to follow.

Besides the Minsk tractor works a score of other enterprises in Byelorussia are engaged in producing agricultural machinery, such as tractor trailers, fertilizer spreaders, potato diggers, top-gathering and flax-scutching machines, graders, equipment for stock-rearing farms, etc. The most important of them called "Gomselmash" produces high-efficiency fodder grass harvesters and silage combines.

There are 27 factories of machine-tool and tool-production industries. They suppyly the home and foreign market with automatic and half-automatic machine tools, special-purpose units, automatic lines of over a hundred standard sizes and designed for various purposes, viz. lathes, drillers, broaching, milling and cutting-off machines, planes, tool-grinding and balancing

machines, etc. as well as foundry equipment, press-forging plants, tools and machining attachments. Minsk, Vitebsk, Gomel, Baranovichi, Orscha and Pinsk have become important machine-tool building centres. A great part of Byelorussian machine tools are equipped with the most precise counting devices, sensitive instruments and programmed control. One third of these are machine tools of high and super high presicion. Factories in Minsk and Gomel are producing more than four hundred standard sizes of ball, roller and needle bearings, their weight ranging from 200 grammes to 200 kilograms.

Widely developed in the republic is electrical engineering. Its head enterprises are the Minsk electrical engineering and Brest electric bulb factories, electric motor works in Mogilev and Luninets, electric equipment factory in Gomel, factory of power semiconductor rectifiers in Molodechno, "Motor car wire" factory in Shchuchin and calbe factories in Gomel and Mozyr.

One of the leading branches of Byelorussian machine-building industries is instrument engineering. The range of articles it produces is very extensive. The output of the watch-making factory in Minsk is more than eight million "Luch" watches, including men's and women's wrist-watches, automobile clocks, both wind-up and electron types. The Vavilov factory in Minsk and "Zenith" factory in Vileika make cameras. According to the comprehensive program of economic integration of the CMEA countries (member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) the Minsk computer engineering and Brest electromechanic factories are engaged in manufactoring computers. The Ordzhonikidze factory in Minsk is turning out "ES—1060" which executes a million and a half operations a second and preparing to serially produce a "five-million operations" computer "ES—1065".

The BSSR's radio engineering industry is known for its TV-sets "Gorizont" and "Vityaz", transistor radio "Okean" and short-wave radio stations. The chief enterprises representing this branch are the "Gorizont"

amalgamation in Minsk and the television factory in Vitebsk which was resently put into service. The youngest branch of machine-building in Byelorussia is electronic industry. The semiconductor devices and other articles which are its products go to radio engineering and computer enterprises, factories producing means of automation and communication and to research institutions.

The Byelorussian republic is the seat of a group of enterprises engaged in producing equipment and machinery for construction industry, light and food industries, enterprises of trade and public catering, municipal economy and consumer services. The refrigerator factory in Minsk accounts of over 600 thousand pieces of annual finished products. A number of factories in Byelorussia build modern river boats known not only at home but also abroad.— in Great Britain, GDR, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia.

The current Five-year plan (1981—1985) envisages an increase of machine-building in the BSSR half as much again. A factory of on-line gauging instruments in Orsha and a heavy forging works in Zhodino are to be put into operation. Ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy is planned to arise as an independent branch in addition to the foundries which are in service. A non-ferrous metal rolling process-stage metallurgical works is designed to be built in Molodechno as the first powder metallurgy enterprise in the country and also an aluminium alloy works in Glubokoye.

Big chemistry. Prior to the revolution Byelorussia could boast only of cottage industry enterprises which turned out chemical products of wood processing such as charcoal turpentine, rosin and tar. The only larger factory near Orsha, owned by a German firm, produced acetone, acetic powder and methyl alcohol. Today the BSSR's chemical industry has become truly big industry — among its products are mineral fertilizers, petroleum derivatives, man-made fibres, rubber nad plastic articles, laquers and varnishes.

The mineral fertilizers are of three kinds: phospha-

te, nitrogen and potash fertilizers. Granular superphosphate is produced by the Gomel chemical plant. Operating on natural gas and athospheric nitrogen, the Grodno amalgamation "Azot" products ammonia water salpeter, nitrogen granules, carbamide, etc. Four departments of the "Byelorussian Potash" amalgamation account for half of the potash fertilizers of the total mined in the USSR and 16 per cent of their world output.

In the 60ies a new branch of Byelorussian economy — oil-extracting industry — sprang up. The oil extracted on the spot and brought from the east of the country is refined at two enterprises in Novopolotsk and Mozyr. These provide with combustible materials and lubricants the north-western regions of the USSR and partly export their production to the countries of Europe. The oil products are further processed at the Novopolotsk amalgamation "Polimer" which turns out polythene nitron wool substitute and other materials.

Chemical fibres are made by the "Khimvolokno" amalgamation in Mogilev, man-made fibre factory in Svetlogorsk and the Grodno synthetic fibre factory. The giant of chemical industry — "Bobruiskshina" amalgamation provides the home and foreign market with "footware" for the "Lada" motor cars, powerful "Belaz" dump trucks, "Belarus" tractors, earth-moving machines, combines and motor cycles. There are three pharmaceutic enterprises in the BSSR.

Power engineering. The fuel and power base of Byelorussia is successfully developing on new technical and structural foundations. Before the revolution firewood accounted for $^{9}/_{10}$ of the fuel budget. In the 1930ies the supremacy was taken over by peat, the production of which in 1973 reached 11.4 mln tons. Since 1974 its production as fuel began to decrease gradually. At present it is mainly used for purposes of agriculture and partly for making insulating plates and producing mineral wax. Coal is brought from the Ukraine to be used as fuel but on the whole the decisive role in the fuel budget now belongs to natural gas that arrives from the east and to industrial fuel oil.

As a matter of fuct, there was no electria l power engineering in pre-revolutionary Byelorussia. In 1913 the power of all power stations amounted only to 5 thousand kilowatts. Only three factories were electrically driven and electric power was mainly used for cinema theatres, lighting the thoroughfares of the principal towns of the provinces and the flats of the nobility. In Minsk only 84 houses were electrically lighted. Affer the October revolution in accordance with Lenin's plan of electification several electric power stations were constructed, but during the war they were destroyed by the Hitlerites.

Today the republic's power engineering is steadily gaining momentum. Such big thermal power stations as Lukolmskaya (2.4 mln kW), Vasilevichckaya, Smolevichskaya, Berezovskaya and a number of powerful heat-electric generation plants have been built. Their aggregate capacity exceeds 6 mln kW and they annually produce 35 billion kilowatt-hours. In the near future the construction of the first atomic power station will get under way.

Wood-using industries. In former times this was the leading branch of Byelorussian economy, it accounted for over one fourth of the industrial production and one fifth of the timber export from Russia. Although its share in the country's production has shrunk to 4 per cent its total output has greastly grown owing to processing industries of higher efficiency, such as production of fibre and particle boards, furniture, cardboard, paper, plywood, products of hydrolysis of wood. There are large wood-working, plywood and match factories and furniture-making factories in Bobruisk, Borisov, Pinsk, Mozyr, Retchitsa, Ivatsevichi, Minsk, Gomel, Mosty, Slonim and other places.

Wood serves as material for making objects of art, musical instruments and all kinds of fancy articles. The pianos made in Borisov are marked for high quality of sound. They are in great demand both at home and abroad, particularly in France, Rumania, Sweden, Greece, Singapore and other countries.

Construction industry. For many centuries the Bye-

lorussian towns and villages were made of wood, i. e. wooden houses predominated in them. Now the situation has changed because of development of the building materials industry. The Byelorussian factories bake about two billion bricks yearly — sixfold the pre-revolutionary amount. Two large cement and corrugated asbestos board mills are in operation, construction of one more cement plant is envisaged. Over three hundred enterprises produce prefabricated reinforced concrete, large-sized panels and concrete units. Their annual output is 5 mln cubic metres of precast concrete constructions and structural elements. This makes it possible to put the construction on an industrial footing and reduce the building activity mainly to mounting and assembling the pre-fabricated constructions and structural elemens, to set up large integrated house-building factories and amalgamations.

Production of industrial glass articles is affiliated to construction industry. The most important enterprise belonging to this branch is the Lomonosov glass-works in Gomel which produces window pane, foamglass, glass tubes. Byelorussia accounts for a considerable share of Soviet export of window pane, as well as glassware and china. Articles of high artistic value from ordinary and cut glass are manufactured by two enterprises: "Neman" in the settlement of Berezovka and the Dzerzhinsky factory in Borisov. "Byelorussian glassware," says a Norwegian B. Scott, "is a world of marvel..."

Industry for everybody. Highly developed in Byelorussia is versatile production of consumer goods. Its light industry is dominated by textile branches: flax-, wollen-, cotton- and silk-manufacturing idnustries, knitted goods industry and others. Linen manufacture is concentrated in the Orsha linen factory. It produces 36 articles (costume, dress and curtain cloth, coloured and white table cloth, decorative small cloths and table napkins, counterpanes and bed linen) in nearly 2500 varieties. These are sent to 700 home customer enterprises and exported to 16 countries of the world,

including GDR, Bulgaria, Finland, FRG, Belgium, Japan, Korean People's Republic and Hungary.

Worsted and fine cloth is produced in Minsk and Grodno, cotton cloth in Baranovichi, knitted wear in Vitebsk and Pinsk, carpets in Vitebsk and Brest. Ten enterprises in the BSSR have an annual production of up to 42 mln pair of leather and upwards of 6 mln pair of rubber footwear — more than five pair per each citizen of the republic.

Highly versatile in structure and production is the food industry of the BSSR. It includes score of branches, such as dairy and meat, cheese-making, fishing, sugar refining, flour and cereals, wine brewing industries, bread-baking, macaroni foods, butter and fat, yeast, starch and treacle, tobacco and makhorka-making, fruit and vegetable processing and also distilleries, confectioneries, perfumeries and so on. A wide network of food industry enterprises distributed rather evenly over the republic, close to the sources of raw materials, transport routes and places of consuming the finished products. To cater for the versatile tastes of the public, they turn out a great variety of foods which include national foodstuffs and many products typical of other peoples. As the assortment of products is expanded and renewed it is perfected by enhancing their savoury and nutritious qualities.

The republic's cornfields. A steady growth of production of goods of popular consumption is hased on stable development of heavy industry and agriculture. Byelorussia belongs to agriculturally developed regions of the USSR. Althougt its arable land area accounts for less than two per cent of that of the whole country Byelorussia claims up to 3 per cent of the total sown area, 6 per cent of the neat cattle, 6.5 cent of the swine. Byelorussia comes second among the Union republics as regards flax fibre crops, third as regards potato crops and milk yields, fourth as regards production of meat and eggs. There are 1770 collective farms and 907 sovhozes in the BSSR, the average cultivated land area per each of these farms being 3.5 thousand hectares, including 2.5 thousand of sown area. 24 per cent of the po-

pulation employed in the republic's economy are engaged in agriculture.

The material and technical basis of the republic's agriculture has been considerably strengthened of late. The countryside can now boast of 120 thousand tractors, 30 thousand grain combines and large numbers of other machinery which allow to mechanize the greater part of work in field-crop cultivation and live-stock raising. The use of mineral and organic fertilizers is increased. The scientific potential of the countryside is on the up-grade. Besides the four higher education agricultural institutions and 12 research institutes there is a wide network of experimental fields, stations and centres which are engaged in developing new varieties of cultures and breeds of cattle, promoting scientific innovations into practice. More than 56 thousand graduate specialists — agronomists, stock-breeders, veterinaries, engineers and economists are working in the country.

Byelorussia has not been endowed by nature with very rich lands. Four fifths of its arable land is constituted by acid soil and is marshy. So these lands need constant improvement. A particularly wide scope this work has assumed in the south of the republic and in Polesye, a depressing picture of which was drawn by the great Russian writer Ivan Turgenev in the last century: "On both sides there spreads a forest bog, all green and dark, all covered with bulrush and alderthickets... You ride on and on, but this eternal forest murmur will never stop and a gnawing anxiety grows upon you and you feel an urge to go into the open, to see the light, an urge to take a long breath — so oppressive is this odorous dampness and rot..."

Today the task is not confined to just draining the Polesye bogs, ridding them of the moisture, but on the contrary, preserving this moisture, improving the microclimate and treating nature with care. In accordance with the local master plan of melioration 2.2 mln ha. of marshy land are to be reclaimed, 17 reservoirs and over 500 ponds made, 150 thousand ha. of sandy soils forested, field-protecting forest-belts grown, a network

of roads built, 72 Soviet farms and 19 collective ficheries set up.

During the past 15 years 1.3 mln ha. of peaty marshland have already been reclaimed, 480 thousand of them with the help of closed drainage. Drainage-humidifying polder systems with dykes and mechanic control of water regime are constructed in the floodlands of rivers, covering an area of 100 thousand hectares. Six reservoirs and 225 ponds are made. Nearly five thousand km of roads and highways are built, 30 sovkhozes are under construction, 16 of them being already in service. They yield 35 to 45 centners of grain-crops, 200 to 350 centners of potatoes per hectare, and produce 200 centners of meat and 500 to 800 centners of milk per 100 ha. of arable land.

In the course of centuries the yied capacity of grain-crops in Byelorussia did not rise over 7 to 8 centners. In mid-sixties it exceeded the mark of 10 and today it already goes beyond 20 centners, while the success of separate districts and farms is still higher which ensures the gross output of grain crops totalling about 7 billion tons a pear. The yield capacity and gross output of potatoes, the alternative of bread in Byelorussia, are growing. Its total harvest in the republic is over 12 million tons a year and about two million are sent to ther parts of the USSR. The output of vegetables is growing, namely, of cabbage, cucumbehrs, carrots, beetroot, tomatoes, onions, etc. Many inrustrial crops are successfully cultivated. such as flax, sugar-beet, hemp, tobacco, hop, medicinal herbs. Byelorussia is rightly considered to be a land of horticulture, it abounds in apple, pear and cherry orchards.

Hearly 60 per cent of the production of countryside economy in Byelorussia falls to the share of animal husbandry. Its annual yield is about 900 thousand tons of meat in slaughter weight, over 6 mln tons of milk, 3 billion eggs. A network of important beef and pork meat-packing plants are being set up over the republic. A giant complex designed for growing and fattening of 108 thousand pigs a year is the Soviet

farm "Loshnitsa" near Borisov. The sovkhoz industrial complex "Mir" near Baranovichi annually fattens 10 thousand head of cattle. This and other farms contribute largely to the carrying out of the food program launched in this country.

Transport. There are five kinds of transport functioning in Byelorussia: railway, road, river, air and pipe-line transport. Interconnected, they form an integral part of the unified transport system of the USSR.

The railway network in the republic is made up of 5.5 thousand km of trunk lines and 3.8 thousand km of spurtracks. 26.6 km of public railways fall at 1000 km of the territory of Byelorussia. On them steam locomotive traction has been fully substituted for diesel locomotive operation and electric traction. The suburban electric trains run in all directions from Minsk — to Molodechno, Osipovichi, Stolbtsy and Orsha. In the near future the whole of the line from Brest to Moscow will be adapted to the use of electric power. The railways account for 61 per cent of the entire turnover of goods and about 40 per cent of passenger turnover of the republic. They annually carry 105 mln tons of goods and 102 mln passengers.

As regards the amount of goods and the number of passengers conveyed the priority in Byelorussia belongs to motor transport. There is a four-fold increase in freight traffic (as compared with 402 mln tons in 1982) and 15-fold increase in public conveyance (1.6 billion) in comparison with the other kinds of transport.

Slow as it is, carriage by river, the oldest means of transportation, is also on the increase. In 1982 the river traffic amounted to 13 mln tons — eight times as much as in 1940. Here the main cargoes are iron ore, coal, broken rock, timber. The busiest transport arteries in Byelorussia are the Dnieper, Sozh, Berezina and particulary the Pripjat with the Dnieper-Bug canal. The other rivers are serviced by small tonnage fleet. There are 28 routes of passenger transport on the rivers.

Air transport of Byelorussia accounts for 2 mln passengers a year. Minsk, the main airport of the republic, is connected with 88 cities and towns of the country, including many industrial centres of Siberia, Far East, Central Asia and the North. Up to 3 thousand people on the average leave Minsk by plane daily. Direct connection with many towns of the republic and the Soviet Unoin is effected througt the airports of Gomel, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Brest and Grodno.

4 thousand km of oil and gas pipelines are laid over Byelorussia. They account for one third of the total turnover of goods in the republic.

Intertown transport is successfully developing. The bus and taxi fleet is constantly on the increase. The electric transport is also progressing. Three cities — Vitebsk, Mink and Novopolotsk —have tramlines, trolleybus service has been introduced in seven towns: Minsk, Gomel, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Grodno, Bobruisk and Brest. In 1984 Metro is to be inaugurated in Minsk, capital of Byelorussia.

Communication. The BSSR has 4.6 thousand of post, telegraph and telephone communication offices, 3.6 thousand of which are in the countryside. Within one year they deal, on the average, with 380 mln letters, 1.7 mln papers and magazines, 10 mln parcels, 10 mln telegrams, 30 mln postal orders. There are upwadrs of 900 thousand office and home telephones.

The republic possesses over 9 mln radio reception points, including 2.2 mln wireless radios, 2.2 mln television sets, 3.7 mln wired radio relay service points, 306 wired radio relay centres are in operation, servicing all the populated points.

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PEOPLE'S WELL-BEING

Steady, planned, crisis-free development of industrial and agricultural production in Byelorussia, as well as over the whole of the country, is attended with a growth of its national income and providing ever more favourable conditions for raising the material well-benig and all-round development of its citizens.

The average wage of workers and employees is steadily growing. Today it amounts to 158 roubles and, in case the privileges and payments from the public consumption fund are taken into account,— to 218 roubles. The collective farmers' incomes are also on the increase. Considering incomes from the personal subsidiary holdings, these approach the arerage earnings of the city dwellers. Growth of deposits in the savings banks also testifies to the increased incomes of the population. Per capita deposit in the republic is upwards of 700 roubles.

Growing incomes enable the public needs to be met more fully. In Byelorussia, like elsewhere in the Soviet Union, prices of goods and services are stable and comparatively low. A kilogram of rye bread, depending on its grade, costs 14 to 18 copecks (according to the rate of exchange, one dollar is equal to approximately 70 copecks), white bread is 20 to 40 copecks, a kilogram of high-grade beef costs 1 rouble 90 c., Dutch cheese — 3R., potatoes — 9 c., carrots — 12 c., milk — 24 c. The tramfare is 3 c., trolleybus and bus fare — 4 to 5 c. The average price of a ticket to the theatre ranges from 1 to 1.5R., to the cinema — from 10 to 70 c. The rent is extremely low — 13 c. per 1 square metre of floor-

space. It accounts for not more than 3 to 5 per cent of the monthly wage. All this guarantees a high purchasing power of the population.

In 1980 every citizen of Byelorussia bought on the average 1025 roubles' worth of various goods. This was by 468 roubles more than in 1970. The sale of goods during that period grew by 84 per cent, including foodstuffs accounting for 68 per cent and manufactured wares by 102 per cent. Despite all the difficulties, the structure of diet is improving. The consumption of more nutritious products is on the increase, which is evidenced by the following table (per capita in a year, in kilograms):

	1970	1980
meat and fat	49	63
milk and dairy products	371	375
fish and fish products	13.9	15.8
eggs (pieces)	170	294
sugar	35.1	42.6
oil	4.6	7.0
potatoes	245	205
vegetables and gourds	70	76
bread products (in terms of flour), groats, macaroni	144	141

Foreign guests take note of good Byelorussian diet. A certain American lady tourist said with admiration: "The quality of foodstuffs is high. And how delicious is the bread... By the way, the price of bread is very low."

To suit the convenience of the population, the organization of trade is being perfected. Today the BSSR has 25 thousand shops and stalls, 12 thousand canteens, buffets, snack-bars, tea-rooms, cafes and restaurants with a total of 700 seats. In the general commodity circulation state trade accounts for 64 per cent, consumer society (Belkoopsoyuz) — for 32 per cent, the markets about 4 per cent.

The sphere of consumer service provides the population of Byelorussia with over 640 kinds of services. This is a highly mechanized and widespread branch

of economy. It includes 11 thousand amalgamations, factories, mills, domestic utensil repairs, reception centres. On the average, every citizen receives 35 roubles' worth of services a year.

A great benefit to the Byelorussian population is the public consumption fund. In a year it amounts to 4.4 billion roubles, or on the average, 450 roubles per capita. These are privileges and pensions, free education and medical treatment, places in sanatoria and holiday homes at a discount, generally available admission to cultural institutions. With a population of 9.8 mln 1930 thousand people received pensions in Byelorussia. The public funds provide for a wide scope of house construction. During the past Five-year period (1976—1980) nearly 400 thousand flats were built with an aggregate floorspace of 21 mln square metres, every fifth citizen celebrated a house-warming.

In the current Five-year plan period (1981—1985) new measures are being put into effect to step up the well-being of the people. The real wage per capita will grow by more than 16 per cent. The sale of commodities will increase by 24 per cent and the amount of consumer service — by 40 per cent. Housing construction will be carried on at a higher pace.

The Central Committee of the CPSU of late adopted a decision "On Measures to Provide Fulfilling Plans of Construction of Housing and Public and Consumer Service Projects". The decision specifies that in keeping with the social program adopted by the XXVI Party Congress a large-scale construction of housing and enterprises providing cultural and personal service is under way in our country. During the first two years of the eleventh Five-year plan upwards of 210 mln square metres of floor space in dwelling houses were commissioned and the networks of general education schools, children's pre-school institutions, hospitals and polyclinics were extended. Tens of thousands of families in the towns and villages of Byelorussia annually move to new well-appointed flats.

Byelorussia's trade union ogranizations are doing a great deal of work in this line. They take part in

elaborating Five-year and yearly plans of construction of houses and enterprises of personal services and check its progress and quality. In conformity with the regulations governing public control by the Byelorussia's trade unions of the construction of houses and enterprises to provide cultural and personal services the following public bodies have been set up and are functioning in the republic: public inspections at the regional trade union councils, groups of public inspections at the regional trade union councils, groups of public control at the republican and regional committees of trade unions in certain industries and public commissions at trade union committees.

A great achievement for themselves the working people of Byelorussia consider the organization of health-protection — free of charge, available for everybody, well-planned and prophylaxis-oriented. The BSSR has at present 873 hospitals, 1343 outpatients' departments and polyclinics, about three thousand first aid posts at factories, 195 ambulance service stations, 165 sanitary inspection stations, 628 maternity advice bureaus and children's polyclinics. If in 1913 there were 9.3 hospital beds per 10 thousand of population today there are 128, and there are 35 physicians instead of 1.7. Facilities in sanatoria and health-resorts are provided on an ever increasing scale: there are 46 sanatoria in the republic, 21 holiday homes, 84 factory preventoriums where working people are provided with facilities for rest and medical treatment without stopping their work.

For the sake of keeping up the health and cheerfulness of people physical culture, sport and tourism are developed. The cause of drawing broad masses of the population into physical culture is promoted by the activities of nine sports societies, doing the National Sport Complex known as GTO (Ready for Labour and Defence of the USSR), joining the so-called "health groups" at one's place of residence, setting up physical culture and health centres. The 3-million strong army of athelets have at their disposal 138 stadiums, 8 thousand football fields, 28 thousand sports grounds,

85 winter covered swimming pools, over 3 thousand gymnasiums. Byelorussian sportsmen go in for nearly all Olympic sports. Among the well-known champions and prize-winners are women gymnasts Olga Korbut and Larisa Petrik, wrestler Alexander Medved, weightlifters Valeri Shary and Leonid Taranenko, cyclist Alexander Kaminsky, rowers Vladimir Romanovsky and Vladimir Parfenovich, fencers Helen Belova and Tatyana Samusenko, Alexander Romankov. Byelorussia is famed more and more as a country of tourism. There are dozens of routes mapped for tourists, marked for picturesque spots and abounding in memorials of history and culture. There are 11 tourist bases, three hotels, several campings and a motel. Byelorussia is annually visited by tens of thousands of tourists from more than 60 countries of the world.

CULTURE

The six and a half decades following the October revolution saw a great spiritual rise of the Byelorussian people. Largely conducive to this was public education, free, generally available, scientific in content, permeated with the spirit of humanism, industry, love for the Mother country, respect for all nations of the world. The system of public education embraces pre-school upbringing, general secondary education, vocational and technical education and also cultural and educational public activities. It provides a single continual process of upbringing and instruction, fostering the skills of labour and social activity.

Today there are four thousand pre-school establishments in Byelorussia — day nurseries and kindergartens where about 600 thousand children are being educated. Their maintenance and education is either free or does not cost the parents more than 25 per cent of the expenses.

Like elsewhere in the USSR, the switching over to general compulsory secondary education is mainly complete in Byelorussia. The leading role in this belongs to the integrated labour-oriented polytechnical general education school. Today there are 6.9 thousand schools of this type in the BSSR. They accommodate 1.5 mln people, including 110 thousand attending night-schools. They are instructed by 103 thousand teachers. Every year the network of extended-day schools and classes is expanding in the republic. These provide board and rest facilities for the pupils, preparing their home tasks and going in for sports. Experimental work

is initiated in switching over to educating children from 6 years of age in so-called "zero" preparatory classes. Labour-oriented education as well as better choice of future trades are promoted by inter-school training vocational centres. A wide network of Young Pioneer Palaces and Houses, clubs of young technicians and naturalists, sporting schools, excursion-and-tourist bases, children's stadiums and parks contribute to versatile development of the pupils. Schoolchildren spend their summer holidays amidst nature in Young Pioneer camps, camps of Labour and Rest.

Schoolchildren show an ever greater bent for acquiring workers' trades through a system of vocational and technical traning. Today Byelorussia has 225 schools belonging to this system. 160 thousand pupils attending them are mastering 303 trades. The greater part of these schools along with a trade provide a complete secondary education for the youth. Secondary technical education in Byelorussia is provided by 136 training colleges and schools. These graduate about 50 thousand professionally qualified specialists in nearly two hundred professions.

Higher school is likewise on the upgrade. Today Byelorussia has 33 higher educational establishments: three universities (in Minsk, Gomel and Grodno), 10 technical institutes, 40 agricultural, 7 pedagogical, 3 medical, 2 economic institutes, a theatre and art, culture institutes, a conservatoire and a higher party school. They are attended by 182 thousand students. This number exceeds the total student body either in FRG or France or Italy and other developed countries of the world. Within a year the BSSR's institutions of higher education graduate over 30 thousand specialists.

Taking into account the other organized forms of education, it can be rightly stated that every third citizen of Byelorussia is engaged in this or that kind of study. In fact, the knowledge of the people in the aggregate is constantly re-stocked through self-education, reading literature, with the help of radio and telivision. and owing to diverse activities of cultural and educational establishments and societies.

In pre-revolutionary times Russia on the whole and Byelorussia in particular lagged behind the European countries as regards general cultural development. There were too few centres and places where one could spend one's leisure time. There were only 237 clubs and public houses. Today it has 6300 clubs, houses and palaces of culture. Here evening parties, lectures and literary gatherings are arranged for recreation. 6350 public lecture centres, 44 thousand amateur art activity groups are functioning, with more than a million participants. Noted centres of knowledge in Byelorussia are the libraries — they are 17 thousand in number — well-stocked with 205 mln books. A good deal of educational work is carried on by 67 museums of local lore, history and economy, memorial, literary, hostoric, museums of fine arts and others. The republic has 10 book and one newspaper and magazine publishing houses. They bring out annually upwards of three thousand book titles with a circulation of more than 40 mln copies. Television and radio of the republic broadcast five programs.

Scientific thought arose in Byelorussia many centuries ago, but prior to the revolution there were essentially no research centres, except for three experimental agricultural centres with a staff of 12 research officers. Today there are scores of important scientific institutions headed by the Academy of Sciences which are staffed with 39 thousand researchers. A great scientific potential belongs to the higher educational establishments. Research is carried on at factories and mills: many of them have research centres, bureaus and laboratories of their own. 12 scientific-and-practical and scientific-and-technical amalgamations have been set up.

Byelorussian scientists carry on research involving all the main trends of world science. They are successful in solving many topical problems of matematics, quantum electronics, nuclear power engineering, technical cybernatics, physical metallurgy, chemistry, biology and also participate in space explorations. Widely known are the discoveries of the Lenin prize

winners: physicist H. A. Borisevich and mathematician V. P. Platonov. A contribution to the development of economy and culture of the republic is made by the researchers in social sciences. The schools of a number of Byelorussian scientists have won a wide recognition in the world of science.

Flowering brightly is the many-sided art of Soviet Byelorussia. As it continued the best realistic traditions of the past it truthfully reflected the life and aspirations of the Byelorussian people and helped them in their struggle and toil, aroused a keen interest on the part of other peoples. Byelorussian literature enriches itself with new remarkable works of belles lettres. Their main themes are the October revolution, social and economic changes in the countryside and town, the Great Patriotic War, struggle for peace, formation of a new man, historic past of the Byelorussian people. Greatly famed are the prose writings of Ivan Shamyakin, Ivan Melezh, Yanka Bryl, Vasil Bukov, Vladimir Karatkevich, poetry of Petrus Brovka, Maxim Tank, Pimen Panchenko, dramatic art of Kondrat Krapiva, Andrei Makayonok. In accordance with the UNESCO's decision the Byelorussia people in 1982 celebrated solemnly and on a large scale the 100th anniversary of birth of the founders of their present-day literature, their beloved bards Yanka Kupala and Yakub Kolas.

Deeply rooted in the people's creative tradition, the musical culture of Byelorussia blossoms forth. Byelorussian composers Eugene Glebov, Vladimir Olovnikov, Yuri Semenyako, Igor Luchenok, Henrich Vagner and others win recognition for themselves in many genres — beginning with opera and symphony down to mass songs. The republic can boast of such remarkable musical companies as the state symphony orchestra, I. I. Zhinovich public orchestra, G. R. Shirma's academic choir, folk song and dance ensemble, state dance ensemble, "Khoroshki", "Verasy", "Syabry", "Charaunitsy", "Pesnyary"...

The republic has 17 theatres. Among them are the Bolshoi academic opera and ballet theatre, Y. Kupala academic drama theatre, Russian drama theatre named

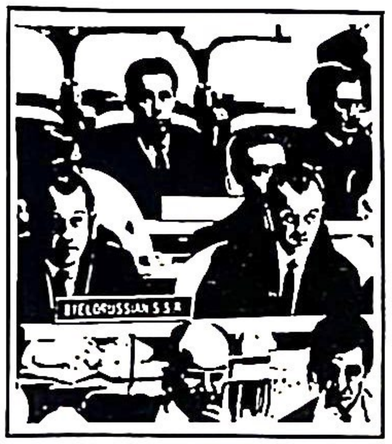
after M. Gorky, musical comedy theatre — all in Minsk, Y. Kolas Byelorussian drama theatre in Vitebsk and others. Their repertoires are made up of classics and the plays of modern Byelorussian, Russian and foreign playwrights. One of the masterpieces of the republic's theatrical art is the production of "Paulinka" after a play by Yanka Kupala at the theatre bearing his name.

A number of hits have been contributed by the rather young cinema art of the republic. They include the following films: "Moscow—Genoa", "I, Francisc Skorina", "The Time of Her Sons", "The Black Birch", "The Only Alternative", "People on the Swamp", "High Water Victims" "I Share Your Pain", "King Stakh's Wild Hunting". One of the leading themes of films produced by the Byelorussian studios is the struggle against fascism during the second world war.

Recognition on the part of their own people and at exhibitions arranged in other republics and abroad is won by many paintings of Byelorussian artists. Widely reputed are the canvases by Mikhail Savitsky: "Partisans. Blockade", "Taking an Oath", "The Vitebsk Gates", "The Partisan Madonna", "Cornfield", a cycle of paintings called "Figures on the Heart" and devoted to the prisoners of the Hitler death camps. The works of Grigori Vashchenko extolling the beauty of Polesye are of interest. Sculptors have created a gallery of portraits of revolutionary fighters, war heroes, toilers of the factories and fields. Massive propaganda activities dedicated to the events of the Great Patriotic War is in progress. Owing to the creative endeavour of the architects one can feast one's eyes on the streets and thoroughfares of Minsk, Gomel, Novopolotsk, Soligorsk, rural settlements of Sorochi, Malets and others.

Marvellous samples of objects of art and everyday life are created by people's craft. These are fairy tales and ballads, melodies, songs and dances, creation of rural architecture, decorative and applied art and art of cooking. Art-critics have recorded over a hundred dances, such as "Lyavonikha" and "Yourachka", "Myatelitsa" and "Kryzhachok", "Lyanok" and "Bulba", "Mikita" and others. Byelorussian housewives are fa-

med by their various smoked products, sausage, saltisons (Byelorussian dish: stuffing prepared from minced salted pork fat, kidneys and other meats with added seasonings stuffed into a prepared intestine and then baked in the oven), cheeses, numerous potato dishes, pickles and jams. In all its variety people's creative art reveals itself at the time of revolutionary, labour and family festivities.



ON THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

As a sovereign country, the BSSR enjoys full rights and is active on the foreign arena. From the moment of setting up the United Nations Organization (UNO) Byelorussia as one of its constituent member states takes an active part in the work of this association, its organs and institutions. Together with the USSR and Ukrainian SSR Soviet Byelorussia regularly sends its delegations to the sessions of the UNO General Assembly, has its permanent delegation and its own staff in it. The BSSR is a member of 64 international specialized organizations, commissions, bureaus, funds and other organs.

On the initiative of Byelorussia the international organizations have adopted a number of important decisions, particularly on the punishment of war criminals, on education of youth in the spirit of ideas of peace and friendship among nations. The BSSR has signed more than 150 treaties, agreements, protocols and conventions on co-operation with other countries in various fileds. Byelorussia has many a time been the seat of convening international meetings, such as UNO seminars on social aspects of industrialization and on distribution of industry, seminar of the International organization of labour, on inspection of labour, etc. Together with representatives of the USSR and Ukr. SSR and other peace-loving countries the envoys of the BSSR are struggling for implementing a policy that answers the basic interests of all nations of the world, for their peace and security, cooperation and friendship.

The Byelorussian people indefatigably strengthens

and broadens its ties with the peoples of other countries. Its public organizations have established direct contacts and exchange delegations with their trade unions, youth, women's and sports organizations. Fruitful are the activities of the Byelorussian Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with foreign countries. It maintains contacts with 403 organizations of 73 countries. Besides, the BSSR is the scene of activities of 14 Soviet societies of friendship with the peoples of certain countries. Extensive are the foreign ties of the Byelorussian committee of defence of peace and women's committee.

In participating in the movement of sister-cities Minsk, capital of the republic, is connected with Nottingham, Great Britain, Sendai, Japan; Bangalore, India; Merida, Mexico; Orsha, Gomel, Zhodino, Mogilev and Grodno have struck up a friendship with French towns of Vaulx-en-Velin, Clermont-Ferrand, Vénissieux, Villeurbanne, Limoges; Soligorsk with the Belgian La Louvière, Baranovichi with the Finnish Heinola. And certain regions of the BSSR have grown akin with regions, districts and provinces of socialist countries.

The BSSR contributes largely to the economic cooperation of the USSR with foreign countries. Over a third of its deliveries abroad are made up of machines, equipment and instruments. The republic's factories account for a considerable part of Soviet export of tractors, metal-cutting machine tools, motor cars and computers. The output of 350 of its enterprises are bought by over a hundred countries. Three fourths of the Byelorussian export goes to the Socialist countries, 8 per cent to the developing countries, 17 per cent to the developed countries of the West.

International cultural ties of Byelorussia are becoming more and more multiple. They are successfully developing in various branches of science. The Byelorussian scientists have established contacts with their colleagues from scores of countries. The higher educational institutions of the BSSR fruitfully cooperate with universities and institutes of other countries, exchange with them professors, post-graduate students, students, manuals and scientific publications. At present students

from 103 countries of the world are studying in Byelorussia.

The BSSR's foreign ties in the field of literature and the Arts are expanding. Nearly every year day and week Festivals of culture of foreign countries are held in the republic and the programs of Day Festivals of Soviet culture abroad represent the distinctly original, humanistic, life-asserting art: belles-lettres, music, dances and painting. This was the case in Belgium, Great Britain, Italy, France, Finland, Sweden, The BSSR's creative teams and separate artists often go on foreign tours. Cities of Europe, North and Latin America, Asia and Africa enjoyed the Byelorussian cymbals, wonderful Byelorussian folk songs, enthusiastically applauded the rousing dance "Lyavonikha".

With its versatile foreign contacts the people of Byelorussia together with the entire country helps promote peace in the whole world, friendship among all nations of the globe, their social progress and happiness.

Виктор Фомич Борушко
БЕЛОРУССИЯ:
Люди, события, факты

На английском языке

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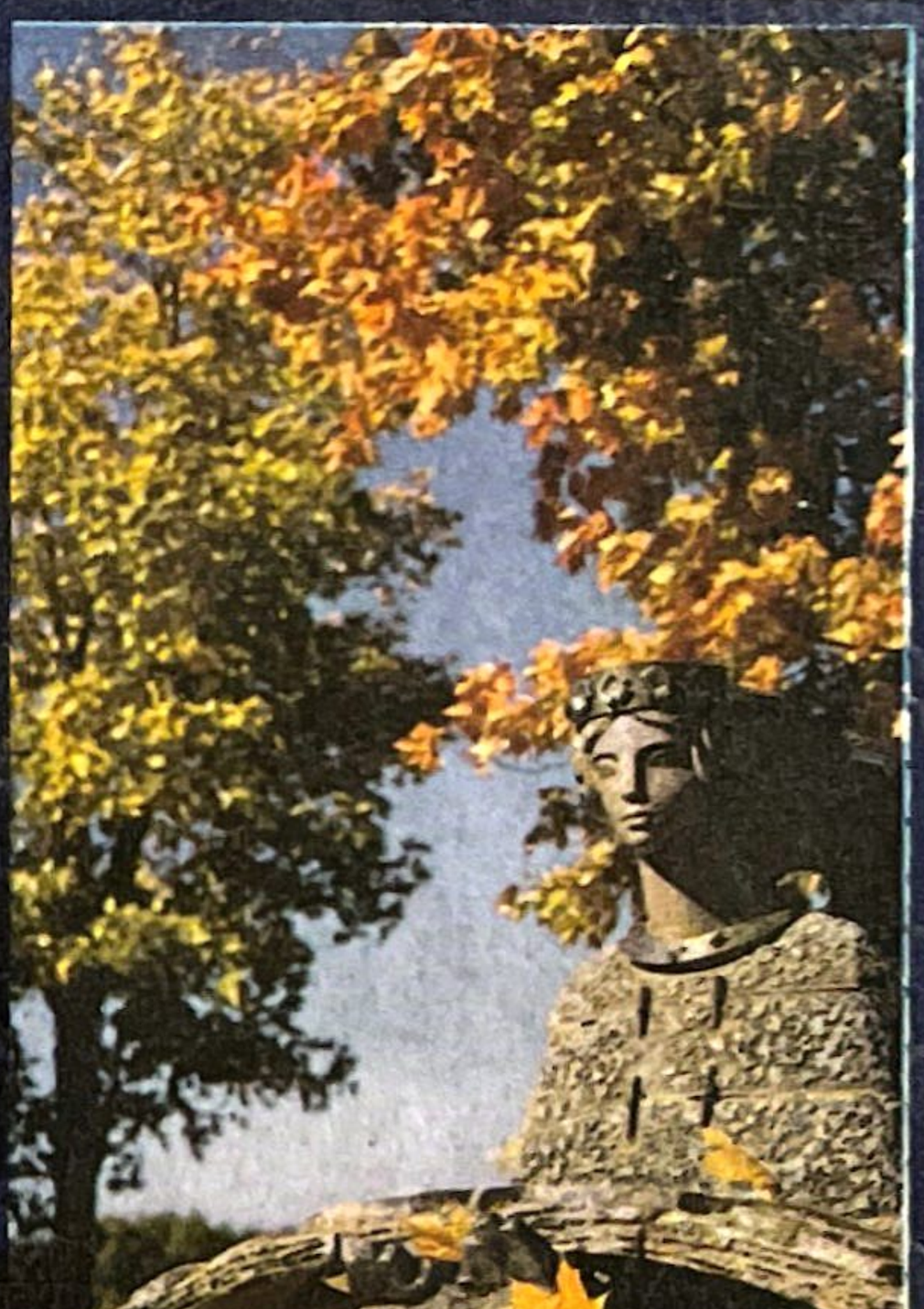

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